An Exploration of Intercultural Competence Among Community College Students: A Focus on First-Year Experiences

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Melissa A. Kirk

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Melissa S. Anderson

Advisor

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates students' intercultural competence at a community college in the United States. In particular, it explores the experiences of first-semester, community college students in a first-year seminar course at a large, urban community college. This mixed-methods study uses data from administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory and semi-structured interviews with the students. Overall, students demonstrated growth toward an intercultural mindset. Implications and suggestions for policy and practice are outlined.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, Anita L. Kirk, whose work ethic and care for people and community set me on the right path.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges have undergone an enormous transformation over the last thirty years. They have shifted from being beacons of local communities to becoming institutions that reach across continents for student recruitment and international partnerships as well as for the stature and reputation associated with global reach. As the stability of national and global economies fluctuates, a community college education has become more desirable and, in some cases, a necessity for many who might otherwise be priced out of an education. Additionally, with surging enrollments, increasing costs, and intensified pressure from politicians to increase retention and completion rates, community colleges are now facing serious questions about identity. To remain open and accessible to students with limited higher-education options, community colleges are being forced by market conditions and increased calls for accountability to adjust their standards, foci, and their target populations.

In addition to shifting institutional identities, community college campuses have also experienced change in their student populations. Many community colleges continue to serve the "non-traditional" student population: students who are typically over twenty-five years of age, working at least part-time, with dependents, and often possessing a general-equivalency diploma. In other cases, however, community colleges are increasingly serving students under twenty-five years of age who enroll directly upon graduation from high school. These community college students are more likely to be working fewer hours and are less likely to have dependents. Differences in gender and ethnicity have also been noted in the college student population. More than half of

community college students are now women, and community colleges are increasingly the destination for students of color as well as new and recent immigrants (Nomi, 2005).

As national demographics shift, the United States can expect students of color to soon constitute the majority college population. One may also reasonably assume that, in the not too distant future, students of color will be the majority population in higher education. Many of these students will begin their education at a community college.

Perhaps more importantly, community colleges may not be equipped with the expertise required to serve 21st-century students. As a result, institutions continuously struggle with strategies to retain first-year students, while preparing them to live, work and thrive in a global society. Conceivably, intercultural competence developed through intercultural learning may provide community colleges with crucial insight into the first-year experiences of first-time freshmen.

Community colleges have also begun to embrace international education. Some have taken this approach to revitalize their general education offerings, to ensure that they are reflective of an ever-changing, increasingly global economy and society with fluctuating community and institutional demographics. Others have embraced international education because recognition as a global campus bolsters the reputation of the institution. Some have moved in this direction for purely financial reasons. The recruitment of international students and the development of international partnerships can be a lucrative venture. Other institutions may have stumbled into international education as the result of quickly conceived mission statements that allude to the college's commitment to graduating "global citizens." Whatever the reason, there are dramatic differences in the ways community colleges demonstrate their commitment to

international education. On the whole, though not always explicitly stated or formulated, the ultimate goal in implementing one aspect of international education or another is to introduce students to intercultural learning. In other words, colleges are purposefully pursuing international education as a means to expose their students to diverse cultures and perspectives so that they will be well positioned to navigate a diverse, multicultural society and global economy and to fulfill their role as prepared and engaged citizens.

With increased attention from legislators, communities, and students, community college leaders must capitalize on these shifts and make the institutional changes necessary to improve retention and completion rates for community college students. Community college leaders should also take this time to re-envision community college education, to include the critical skills needed to work and prosper in an increasingly global economy and society. If community colleges hope to remain relevant and competitive to internal and external constituents, an associate's degree must include broad exposure to intercultural learning, which students may demonstrate through the development of intercultural competence.

Special Features of Community Colleges

Some key data from the sector can help to explain the significance of community colleges and the growing number of community college students in the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), community colleges comprise the largest single postsecondary sector in the United States (NCES, 2005). The 2012 College Board report, *Trends in Public Higher Education: Enrollment, Prices, Student Aid, Revenues, and Expenditures*, noted that, "as total postsecondary enrollment increased from 15.3 million to 20.4 million students between fall 2000 and fall 2009, the total number of students in both the public two-year sector and the public four-year sector increased by approximately 25%. In fall 2009, three-quarters of all undergraduate students (and 70% of full-time undergraduates) were enrolled in public two-year and four-year institutions" (p. 1). "More than half of U.S. Hispanic and Native American undergraduate students are enrolled in community colleges, and so are more than 40% of Black students and students of Asian and Pacific Islander origin" (AACC, 2011). Mullin (2012), in a review of Hauptman's (2011) work, found that "between 1970 and 2005, associate's degrees were the fastest-growing type of degree awarded, growing at twice the pace of bachelor's degrees—a fact that researchers and policy makers are often not aware of" (p. 129).

Research at many national associations has inspired an ongoing dialogue about significant demographic changes in higher education. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) website, "Community colleges are the gateway to postsecondary education for many minority, low income, and first-generation postsecondary education students" (AACC, 2013). Additionally, since 1985, women have

represented more than half of all community college students (AACC, 2013). The majority of Black and Hispanic undergraduate students in the United States attend community colleges (AACC, 2013). According to Nomi's 2005, AACC *Faces of the Future Report*, "first-generation community college students are more likely to be women, older than traditional college age, employed full time, and to support dependents living at home" (p. 1). There is also a growing number of immigrants who begin their education at a community college.

The rise in significance of community colleges, the increase in the number of students of color students seeking higher education, recent trends in the internationalization of higher education, and the growing importance of intercultural competence to live, work, and prosper in a global society and economy signal the need for transformation within community colleges. While it may not be necessary for colleges to have broad internationalization plans, it is crucial that higher education institutions begin to foster intercultural competence.

There is some mention of first-generation students in studies rooted in intercultural learning, but these studies highlight negative findings for first-generation students. For example, research focused on study abroad, one of the most frequently examined aspects of intercultural learning, consistently underscores low participation rates among first-generation students. Conway (2012) illuminates this point, with a particular emphasis on the immigrant student population: "Given the growing numbers of immigrants seeking higher education and the continued importance of the community college in serving the immigrant population, surprisingly little research exists on this student population within community colleges" (p. 212). In the case of community

colleges with large student populations of first-generation students, domestic or immigrant, it is imperative to acknowledge the needs of these students and integrate them, intentionally and strategically, into intercultural learning efforts.

In contrast, there is additional research focused on the assets of first-generation students, rather than considering them and their experiences solely through a deficit lens. For example, Rendon's (1994) work calls on colleges and universities to move beyond the outdated model of serving the privileged, through a predominantly Euro-centric curricular focus, and turning to the needs of the new student body, increasingly diverse, and possessing every capacity to become full-fledged members of the academic and social community. Jehangir's (2009) work on learning communities embedded with critical pedagogy and multicultural curricula lays the foundation for creating a sense of belonging and providing voice to first-generation students in the academy, supporting them to learn the unwritten expectations and rules that are foundational to academic success. Jehangir (2010) builds on our understanding of first-generation student success through her work on the ways in which learning communities can bring students' lived experiences into the classroom, build on their cultural capital, and facilitate ownership and space for their learning and academic and social success. Oldfield (2007) presents the notion of democratizing institutions of higher education to better reflect the diversity of our nation, and to consider students' disadvantages as different, rather than deficits. He suggests numerous reforms to develop support systems for poor and working-class students such as addressing classism, diversifying the faculty and student body and adjusting the college environment to better reflect the needs of an ever-growing first-generation student population.

Community College Students

Demographic shifts in the community college student population accompanied by an increasingly global economy and the growth of the field of intercultural education have prompted only limited change within the community college sector. One might assume that these changes would inspire community colleges to focus more intently on international and global issues, thereby creating a comprehensive student experience designed to prepare students to live, work and prosper in a global society but this ideal is not often realized. Elements of internationalization are occurring on community college campuses but not at the rate needed to accommodate rapid changes in community college demographics and the global economy. Green and Siaya's (2005) American Council on Education (ACE) report measured internationalization at community colleges. They found that 61 percent of 233 community colleges, in response to an institutional survey, scored low on overall internationalization. Institutions often try to respond quickly to new trends and best practices in higher education by developing stand-alone initiatives, programs or services that are not strategically linked or overseen by an office of international education. Though there are many examples of community colleges that have developed strong internationalization plans, too many others have approached internationalization without adequate thought about how the overall process or plan impacts the campus community. More specifically, internationalization plans often lack clearly outlined student learning objectives or a mechanism to measure the impact of internationalization on students.

How does exposure to international education prepare students to be more effective contributors to the economy or society, if at all? Knight (2011) captures this challenge by

pointing out that "while trying to quantify outcomes as key performance indicators may serve accountability requirements, they do not capture the human key intangible performances of students, faculty, researchers, and the community that bring significant benefits of internationalization" (p.15). In the context of community colleges, students need opportunities that broaden their intercultural experience and competence levels both in and out of the classroom. Raby (2007) underscores the need for community colleges to develop intentional, strategic international education plans with explicit strategies for increasing the intercultural competence of students: "Community colleges must enact basic philosophical, economic, and institutional changes beginning with recognition that internationalization is a central element of a quality undergraduate education," (Raby, 2007, p. 65).

One way to understand and assess intercultural learning at the community college level is to understand how exposure to international education impacts students. In other words, institutions can examine what types of programs and activities contribute to the development of intercultural competence. To this end, one must have a working knowledge of what intercultural competence entails and how students can and do develop intercultural competence in a higher education setting. Mere exposure to international education does not prepare students to live, work and prosper in a global society and economy. They must have the skills necessary to work effectively with people from different cultures. Fundamentally, they must be able to cross cultural borders seamlessly in both the local and global context.

This mixed-methods study explores intercultural development in the context of a first-year seminar at an urban community college in New York City through the lens of

Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) and Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. The aim of the study is to examine connections among development of intercultural competence, participation in a first-year seminar, and first-year experiences among first-year community college students. The study is driven by the research question: How is the development of intercultural competence related to aspects of a first-year seminar course and other first-year experiences among students at a large, urban community college? A mixed-method approach is used for the analysis of this topic.

The chapters that follow expand on these themes in more detail. Chapter 2 presents a literature review of intercultural competence, special features of community colleges and first-year seminars. Chapter 3 describes the methods employed to undertake this study. It also presents emerging themes derived from the data as well as the procedures and steps to support analysis of the data. Chapter 4 outlines the results of the study including the initial and later administration of the IDI and the semi-structured interviews which took place at the start of the semester, and again at the end of the semester. Chapter 5 is focused on the discussion

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Intercultural competence has been studied from a variety of perspectives. Some researchers have approached this topic through research on global perspectives, global citizenship or global mindedness, including Yershova (2000), Ahmad (2004), Hunter, White and Godbey (2006), Krutky (2008), Chow (2008), Braskamp (2008, 2010), Lutz (2010), and Guffey (2012), while others have approached this as an issue of intercultural communication such as Bennett (1998, 2007), Westrick (2005), and Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005). Hammer (2003), Paige (2003), Deardorff (2006, 2011), Emert and Pearson (2007), and Holmes, Holmes, and O'Neill (2012) have investigated assessment of intercultural competence. Klak and Martin (2003), Zhao, Kuh and Carini (2005), Stone (2006), Jackson (2008), Leask (2009), and Killick (2012) have studied experiences on and off campus that may be contributing factors to intercultural competence.

Intercultural Competence

Similar to many fields of research, the literature on intercultural competence is rife with intense debate about what intercultural competence is, how to define it, and how it can be learned or developed. Some researchers in this area view intercultural competence as both a goal and desired outcome of internationalization while others view intercultural learning and competence as related solely to study abroad experiences. Whatever the research perspective, it is clear that these ideas have been researched from a variety of perspectives. "Intercultural competence is a key goal of internationalization because it indicates awareness and understanding of culturally diverse others and situations, as well as the presence of behaviors that promote productive and effective

communication among and across cultures" (Emert and Pearson, 2007, p 68). Bennett and Bennett (2004) add, "the intercultural skillset includes the ability to analyze interaction, predict misunderstanding, and fashion adaptive behavior. The skillset can be thought of as the expanded repertoire of behavior—a repertoire that includes behavior appropriate to one's own culture, but which does not thereby exclude alternative behavior that might be more appropriate in another culture" (p. 7). In other words, as students are exposed to various forms of international education, in and out of the classroom, they are learning about culture, how to decode cultural cues, and how to respond appropriately to a variety of cultural situations.

Volet (1998) discusses the lack of interactions between local and international students from Asian backgrounds in Australian higher education contexts. This article examines the factors that students believe influence the forming of mixed groups of local and international students for the completion of academic tasks. Volet (1998) also explores the nature of change in students' perceptions after a successful experience of mixed-group work. Both local and international students' judgments of the situation were included, noting that both parties have shared responsibility for group formations and in the lack of cultural mix. This article has broader implications for the ways in which institutions may or may not capitalize on the potential for intercultural learning on campuses as opposed to some views that intercultural learning only happens through a study abroad experience.

Hammer's (2003) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a 50-item instrument that measures an individual's worldview toward cultural difference. In addition to the 50 items, there are demographic questions related to gender, age, and

amount of previous experience living in another culture, level of education completed, and global region of residence during the first 18 years of life. The theoretical basis of the Intercultural Development Inventory is the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which consists of six stages representing a continuum of increasingly sophisticated intercultural sensitivity, from ethnocentric to ethno-relative orientations (Bennett, 1993). The IDI is a recognized tool in the field of intercultural learning for measuring change in intercultural competence. Most frequently used in higher education settings to measure the impact of study abroad on students' intercultural learning, the IDI has never been used to assess change in intercultural competence in a first-year seminar at a community college.

Paige's (2003) study evaluated the reliability of Hammer and Bennett's Intercultural Development Inventory as a tool to identify one's intercultural sensitivity. The psychometric properties of the tool were assessed, a developmental score was developed to establish an individual on a continuum of intercultural sensitivity, and finally, the sensitivity of the tool was assessed. The results of this study suggest that the Intercultural Development Inventory is a sound instrument to assess intercultural sensitivity but the authors' note that the instrument will likely continue to evolve based on the characteristics of those being evaluated.

The AAC&U's 2005 *Liberal Education and America's Promise* (LEAP) considers the ways in which liberal education may or not be meeting the needs of students entering a 21st century, knowledge based economy. This article includes a review of essential liberal education learning outcomes, including intercultural knowledge and competence, and ponders whether liberal education can be all things to all

students who are entering an increasingly complex world of work in every sector of the economy.

Deardorff's (2006) study examines the views of leading intercultural scholars and college administrators on methods and terminology for determining intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization efforts. The study combined two research methodologies, a questionnaire for U.S. college administrators engaged in internationalization and a Delphi technique used to develop consensus on the components of and definition of intercultural competence by a panel of nationally and internationally recognized intercultural scholars. Twenty-four of 73 institutions participated in the questionnaire, while 23 of 37 intercultural scholars participated in the Delphi study. Among the findings were that administrators and scholars preferred a broader definition of intercultural competence than a definition related to specific components. At the same time, within both groups, over 80% were able to agree on 22 essential elements of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Consensus from both groups also supported the conclusion that intercultural competence can be measured but perhaps best measured by using multiple assessment methods. Finally, according to Deardorff (2006), the study highlighted several issues that support the complex, controversial nature of intercultural competence. Some of these issues include: use of quantitative methods to assess competence, the importance of a theoretical frame in which to place intercultural competence, and whether measuring intercultural competence is specific to context, situation, and relation.

Neto (2006) researched the effectiveness of an intercultural relations course at changing student attitudes towards diversity and feelings of self-worth in Portugal.

Participants in the study included 15 women enrolled in an "intercultural relations master" as part of the experimental group and 18 women students enrolled in a musical impressions course as part of the control group. Questionnaires were administered to both groups as an initial and later within the course, 30 weeks apart. The questionnaire included several scales: a multicultural ideology scale (Barry and Kalin, 1995), an ethnic tolerance scale (Barry and Kalin, 1995), a self-esteem scale (Neto, 2002, 2003; Rosenberg, 1986), a sex-role scale (Neto, 1998) and an ageism scale (Fraboni et al., 1990). The results of this study confirmed that, in addition to the educational benefits students gained from intercultural relations, students experienced personal change as a result of this course. Multicultural ideology and ethnic tolerance were examined as two constructs of cultural diversity. "Students taking the intercultural relations course became significantly higher in multicultural ideology, and significantly more tolerant of different cultures" (Neto, 2006). On another level, students taking the course also experienced a significant increase in self-esteem, assumed to be a related outcome of multicultural. Though this study was limited by the sample size and the fact that it assessed change only between two points in time, "these results are encouraging because they indicate that topics focusing on ethnic diversity can have a positive impact on student attitudes toward multicultural ideology, ethnic tolerance, and self-worth" (Neto, 2006, p. 7).

In Bennett and Salonen's (2007) article on the new American campus, the authors highlight the impact of the intercultural perspective and identify five key trends in the intercultural competence of students. Trends include: intercultural perspective, integration of domestic and global diversity, learning cultural experientially, assessment of intercultural competence, liking intercultural competence with global leadership.

Practical resources are identified for each trend, which include: intercultural perspective, integration of domestic and global diversity, learning cultural experientially, assessment of intercultural competence, linking intercultural competence with global leadership. The authors state, "most of us can no longer enter our classrooms confident that our learners will share our worldview, our cultural norms, or even our language" (Bennett and Salonen, 2007, p. 49).

Using co-cultural theory as a framework, Urban and Orbe (2007) explore how the experience of international students as cultural outsiders affects their communicative practices. Though there are a growing number of international students on US campuses, little research has been done on their communicative experiences. This study analyzes the international student experience, through narrative, to explore how they negotiate in-group–out-group status through communication. Specifically, Urban and Orbe (2007) explore how international students describe their communicative lived experiences by reviewing essays published on the Internet in 2006. They also look at how they negotiate ''foreign'' cultures.

Urban and Orbe's (2007) findings suggest that international students spend much of their communicative experience educating others about their own culture in order to dismiss stereotypes. This process, in turn, prepares international students for a variety of interactions with the host culture. According to Urban and Orbe (2007), co-cultural theory also explains the various communication orientations international students adopt based on their interaction with other cultures, from assimilation to accommodation to separation. This process changed the way that international students saw themselves and others.

Simpson, Causey and Williams (2007) conducted qualitative research to address pedagogy and race in the classroom. They set out to learn more about how students and teachers talk about race in the classroom. They focused on three areas lacking in current research, including: students' experiences talking about race in the classroom, the challenges that accompany race conversations in the classroom, and ways to address race in the classroom. Interviews and focus groups were conducted that revealed two key findings for instructors. First, it is important for instructors to exhibit comfort with and support for diversity, visible in course content and teaching methods. Second, instructors' self-reflexivity can have a positive impact on student engagement with respect to issues of diversity. Finally, research results also indicate that for instructors interested in increasing their understanding of how to incorporate race, culture and diversity content into their courses, students' expertise in these areas has been found to be both relevant and informative (Simpson, Causey and Williams, 2007).

Krutky's (2008) briefing calls for a re-examination of the liberal arts or general education curriculum to include a fusion of multicultural, international and intercultural education in order to prepare students for an increasingly diverse and global life and work experience. Krutky (2008) articulates this integrated approach through the lens of a case study of Baldwin Wallace College and draws on key research from the American Council on Education and the American Association of Colleges and Universities. The changes Baldwin Wallace College undertook were driven by a mission statement change in 2001 that included a call for preparing students to be global citizens. The entire campus community took part in a series of discussions over a multi-year period that included the development of a strategic plan for campus internationalization and the establishment of

new offices and structures, including the office of international education, the languages across the curriculum program, and the faculty intercultural affairs committee to support intercultural and multicultural learning and understanding.

According to Leask (2009), campuses across the globe are not taking advantage of the diversity on their campuses. Leask (2009) outlines the importance of a systems approach in implementing an internalized curriculum. She discusses the significance of developing intercultural skills inside and outside of the classroom to provide students with meaningful curricular and co-curricular experiences with one another. Faculty and staff must be engaged in this process and intentional about infusing intercultural skills into all aspects of the campus experience so students have adequate opportunities to practice and master these skills for success in the classroom and, eventually, in their chosen fields.

According to Morais (2011), though the concept "engaged global citizen" is widely used in higher education, especially to describe outcomes of education abroad, there is no consensus on what it means to be a global citizen. More important, there is no instrument to measure global citizenship or any particular body of literature to support or challenge it. The authors of this study set out to report on the development and validity of a global citizenship scale. Three dimensions of global citizenship were identified through the scale development process: global competence, global civic engagement and social responsibility. This scale, unlike other measures to assess education aboard outcomes, does not rely on self-reporting. Once fully developed and vetted, the global citizenship scale will most likely be used as a pre-and post-test instrument to assess global citizenship among those who have studied abroad.

Though many intercultural experts and college administrators agree that intercultural competence is an outcome of postsecondary internationalization efforts, there is still widespread debate about how to define intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2011). Deardorff's (2011) study relies on two research methodologies, a questionnaire administered to higher education administrators engaged in internationalization at their institutions and the Delphi technique, used to identify consensus among nationally and internationally recognized intercultural experts. The most highly-rated definition of intercultural competence from among the intercultural experts was "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2004, p. 194). While there was agreement among administrators and intercultural experts that both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used to assess intercultural competence, administrators accepted a greater percentage of items related to both the definition and assessment of intercultural competence than intercultural experts. Though this study was limited by a Western-centric view of intercultural competence from the administrators and intercultural experts participating in the study, Deardorff (2011) offers practical guidance for institutions intent on offering students opportunities to engage in intercultural skills building.

Deardorff (2011) discusses her grounded-theory based intercultural competence model (Deardorff, 2006) and outlines the complexities of assessing intercultural competence. She acknowledges other intercultural competence models, including Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993), King and Baxter Magolda's intercultural maturity model (2005), and Cross's cross cultural continuum

(1988). Deardorff (2011) notes that before institutions can begin to assess intercultural competence, they should consult existing literature to define the concept in the context that it will be used. Once institutions have established a definition of intercultural competence, it is essential that they develop a number of mechanisms to assess intercultural skill development both within the curricular and co-curricular context. "It is very important to spend sufficient time defining intercultural competence and developing clear, realistic, and measurable learning outcome statements based on the goals and prioritized foci of intercultural competence aspects (instead of the concept as a whole) because these outcome statements determine the assessment methods and tools to be used" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 73). Deardorff (2011) provided several examples of direct evidence assessment methods including, use of learning contracts where students self-identify intercultural competence goals; use of e-portfolios to measure intercultural learning over a period of time; critical reflection through journaling, blogging and reflection papers; and performance based evidence in which students are observed and assessed in intercultural situations.

Bennett (2012) argues that study abroad, with the absence of an intentional cultural learning component, does not guarantee that cultural learning is taking place or that students gain cultural insight or intercultural competence. Students do not become global citizens by virtue of study abroad experience alone. Currently, most study-abroad programs focus on what is known as "big culture learning" and less on "subjective culture learning." Bennett argues that subjective culture learning is what helps students to distinguish between cultural generalizations versus stereotypes and provides them with a template, which can be drawn upon with exposure to new cultures. Study-abroad

experiences must be coupled with substantial, intentional pre-departure training and support, on-site culture learning, especially subjective culture learning, and re-entry training. Intercultural communication should be a primary focus of study-abroad training if programs expect to affect the intercultural competence of student sojourners.

Holmes, Holmes, and O'Neill (2012), established the PEER model as a new methodological resource for developing and evaluating intercultural competence. The PEER model refers to Preparing, Engaging, Evaluating, and Reflecting upon their competence within a given intercultural encounter. Using an ethnographic approach, the participants of this study, 35 student researchers, connected socially with a previously unknown Cultural Other over a 6-week period. The study establishes the value of the PEER model in facilitating continued relationship building with a Cultural Other in order to facilitate and assess intercultural competence.

Many colleges and universities regularly offer large-scale events that recognize and celebrate global culture with the aim of increasing students' intercultural sensitivity. In most cases, the effectiveness of these events is unclear. Klak and Martin (2003) examine how students' attitudes shifted toward cultural difference after participating in a large-scale campus event. The study, which used the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity and a survey instrument, indicates that the event did have some impact on students' intercultural appreciation. Klak and Martin (2003) also found that these events are most successful when they provide students with the opportunity to explore the cognitive processes that promote or discourage them from increased intercultural sensitivity.

In this article, Killick's (2012) participants were engaged in international mobility experiences. Those who demonstrate the ability to recognize Otherness, individually, or within those that they encountered, were able to generalize this experience into other travel and cultural experiences elsewhere abroad and at home. Their ability to apply this learning to other situations as noted indicated an increased level of global citizenship. Since the majority of students in higher education settings are non-mobile, this study suggests that multicultural/international campuses have the opportunity to develop similar experiences through traditional and non-traditional curricula.

Over the last 20 years, community colleges have experienced unprecedented growth and change. More than half of all college students now begin their college education at a community college. Additionally, the college student population has undergone significant changes as well. Community college students are now more likely to be women, students of color and the first in their families to attend college. While all of this is happening, the economy has become increasingly global and the field of international education has taken on renewed importance in higher education. For 21st century students to live, work, and prosper in this global economy and society, there is now and will continue to be a great need for intercultural learning and intercultural competence.

Many higher education institutions often use the terms international or global to capture their focus or aspirational goals but few understand how to translate these concepts into tangible learning outcomes, especially intercultural learning outcomes (Otten, 2003). Additionally, Otten (2003) discusses the challenges and importance of aligning diversity programs and internationalization at Home. Otten (2003) argues that

both approaches, with intercultural learning as a central theme, seek to change transform higher education institutions.

Using the Delphi Technique, Hunter, White and Godbey's (2006) study provides a working definition of global citizenship and competence developed by interviewing human resource managers at top transnational corporations, senior international educators, United Nations officials, intercultural trainers, and foreign government officers. The definition of the term "global competence", as concluded by the Delphi Panel, was "having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one's environment" (p. 270).

In an American Council on Education (ACE) publication, Olson (2007) outlines the opportunity to link multicultural education and efforts to internationalize campus curricula. Traditionally, curricular internationalization and multicultural education have existed as separate silos with virtually no connection on college campuses. In many institutions, these programs and services are housed in different divisions and may experience competition for resources. Olson (2007) describes the ways in which institutions can integrate the two for a stronger, more rounded, academic experience for students.

Chen (2008) conducted a qualitative assessment of international education in community colleges employing the method of content analysis of doctoral dissertations. The dissertations were identified through a number of queries in a digital dissertation database followed by a detailed review of titles and abstracts. Chen (2008) reviewed 368,039 dissertations over the five-year period, 2002 – 2007. From this review, it was

determined that fewer than one percent was related to international education at community colleges. Among 30 dissertations that were related to international education at community colleges, 14 were focused on international students who had studied in the United States. Not a single dissertation focused on first-year students of color and their experience with internationalization or international education. “Higher education shoulders the challenging responsibility of producing high quality students with international mindsets” (Chen, 2008, p. 83). Chen’s (2008) research highlights the critical need for more research related to internationalization and international education at the community college level.

In a case study based at Griffith University in Australia, Zimitat (2008) explores student perception of internationalization of the curriculum by focusing on their impression of course content, group work in class and socializing on campus. A significant portion of students surveyed could not articulate how their campus experience was either international or intercultural, though they expressed an interest in a global education. The study highlights the need for campuses to articulate international and intercultural elements of the curriculum and the campus experience.

Community colleges offer a rich landscape to support the study of intercultural competence. These anchor institutions, often located in communities where educational gaps are critical, draw from a diverse community of students seeking access to higher education at a cost that will not leave them crippled with debt. They can offer higher education leaders key insights into student success factors as well as critical lessons about the development of intercultural competence.

Special Features of Community Colleges

There is an abundance of research related to the community college experience. To date, this research is concentrated around several key areas, including student perceptions of community college examined by Caporrimo (2007), faculty-student interaction researched by Chang and Chang (2005), and student involvement and engagement investigated by Chaves (2006) and Gibson (2010). Bowman and Bowman (2010), Braxton (2001), Burns (2010), Craig (2008), Fike and Fike (2008), Goldrick (2010), Hawley and Hawley (2005), Kuh, Kuh, Cruce, et al. (2008), Lee (1999), Pascarella (1997, 2004), Tinto (1997, 2006), and Wells and Wells (2008) have examined elements of retention and student success. Various aspects of campus climate, which is sometimes used interchangeably to refer to some facet of campus diversity, and the impact of the campus climate and culture on community college students have been researched by Bowman, Branndenberger, and Hill, et al. (2011), Orbe (2004), Price, Hyle and Jordan, (2009), Rubin (2011), and Simpson, Causey and Williams (2007).

Chaves (2006) discusses adult community college students over twenty-four years of age and the marginalization and low retention rates they often experience on campus. He describes several theoretical frameworks, which explore student development, student engagement, and adult learning as it relates to retention; Tinto's interactionalist theory (1993), Astin's involvement theory (1984) and several other theories related to institutional and support structures. Based on the analysis of these theories and their application to adult community college students, Chaves (2006) calls for a redesign of traditional curricula, support services and campus structures to address the needs of adult students and empower them in their learning in an effort to improve retention.

Using the Community College of Rhode Island as a case study, Craig (2008) considers student factors related to community college student retention: demographic, academic and institutional. Students fared best when they enrolled in community college directly after high school, when they completed their coursework without dropping courses, and when they maintained an above average grade point average. Based on the results of the study, changes in institutional policies and practices may improve student retention and the overall success of the institution. Examples include: improving and increasing outreach to high school students; developing early warning systems to identify students experiencing academic and/or personal difficulties; allocating adequate resources to and strengthening advisement and student support services and finally, tightening the rules for course withdrawals.

Conway (2010) studied the academic aspirations of students enrolled in an urban community college, and how these aspirations differed amongst immigrant and native student groups. The study used admissions data, along with course enrollment and performance data that were merged with data from the ACT Asset Educational Planning Form, for the 2002 freshman cohort at a large northeastern urban community college, part of a multi-institution university system including 2-year and 4-year colleges. Though this study was limited by the fact that ethnic differences, cultural issues, and the circumstances with which various ethnic groups entered the United States were not explored in detail, Conway (2010) identified some important implications for practice. U.S. schooled immigrants were more likely than other student groups to apply to senior colleges though in many cases they needed remediation. Foreign high-schooled immigrants on the other hand were more likely to apply to community colleges despite

strong high school performance. Conway (2010) calls for a new process model to improve counseling for foreign-born students.

Goldrick-Rab (2010) reviewed academic and policy research over a 25-year period to identify factors contributing to community college persistence. Despite a tradition of open access, community colleges have struggled to increase completion rates. Goldrick-Rab (2010) argues that in order to address the complex issues of community college retention, the solution cannot be solely focused on a student or institution focused remedy. Policy changes are likely necessary and in many cases, must accompany any student or institution focused strategies if completion outcomes are to be impacted. Some potential policy reform areas include: changing the opportunity structure, such as financial aid practices; institutional practices such as pedagogical practices; and student incentives aimed at changing academic behavior and/or preparedness. The author also calls for more research on community college practices that work, especially research that is interdisciplinary and uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. Given the rising numbers of students turning to community colleges and the attention they are receiving from politicians, adequate focus must in turn be focused on attracting researchers to identify best practices, which support completion rates.

First-Year Seminars

At the community college level, questions persist about what aspects of the community college experience impact on the development of intercultural learning or intercultural competence. The answer may lie in one of the hallmarks of the first-year experience at a community college, the first-year seminar. According to Gardner (1986), there were major developments in what he framed a “movement” around the first-year

experience (FYE) beginning in the mid 1980s, coinciding with a series of reports highlighting major concerns about the state of undergraduate education in the United States. Within these reports, some of which originated from the National Institute for Education and the Association of American Colleges, there was a consistent call to focus on the first two years of the undergraduate experience and with this, the “movement” was born. According to Gardner (1986), the term FYE originated from the organizers of the University of South Carolina's first National Conference on the Freshman Year Experience, held in February 1983 (p. 262). "The FYE is a deliberate series of experiences which are provided for the students after they have arrived during the time when they are making that second critical decision as to whether or not to stay or leave the institution they chose originally" (Gardner, 1986, p. 267).

Gardner (1986) credits the FYE movement with many enhancements to the freshmen year, including: faculty and staff development on advisement practices leading to new and intrusive advisement models; the explosion of freshman seminars; enhanced orientation models; increased awareness about the significance and availability of undergraduate housing; the growth and importance of co-curricular activities; a focus on peer to peer programs; new campus units devoted to freshman and other special student populations; and the emergence of early warning systems to support retention efforts (p. 265).

“Despite the prevalence of these courses at community colleges, little research has been conducted on their effectiveness” (Zeidenberg, Jenkins and Calcagno, 2007, p. 1). The work of Porter and Swing (2006) further supports the notion that the prevalence and growth of first-year seminars is directly related to the assumption that these courses will

improve college retention rates. “Still there is much not known about the impact of first-year seminars because so much of the existing research on these courses is limited to single-institution studies, and because much of the research focuses on the impact of these courses overall, rather than what specific aspects of the course affect persistence” (Porter and Swing, 2006, p. 90).

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the conceptual framework and methodology used to investigate how change in intercultural competence is related to aspects of a first-year seminar course and other the first-year experiences at an urban community college. To contextualize the study, there is a discussion about the intersection between the internationalization of higher education and the ways in which the concept of intercultural competence is understood and applied in a community college setting. Next, Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) and Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity are introduced to support the framework for the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion about mixed methods research, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

Traditionally, intercultural competence has been associated with campus internationalization or, more specifically, with the ways in which institutions integrate aspects of global and intercultural learning into the curricular and co-curricular experience. Throughout the higher education sector, regardless of a campus's level of internationalization, the most common way to develop and, in some cases, increase intercultural competence has been through some form of study abroad. In the case of urban community colleges, where internationalization efforts may be limited and resources for study abroad may be scarce or non-existent, one must look to the traditional markers of the two-year college experience to understand what happens outside of internationalization that may influence a student's intercultural competence. In other words, for students attending a community college with little or no intentional

internationalization programming in place, there may be something about the traditional community college experience that influences intercultural competence. It is plausible that specific courses, majors, programs, activities, student support services, high-impact practices or co-curricular experiences impact intercultural skill development.

Since many higher education leaders now consider global learning, internationalization and international education to be among the staples of a 21st-century college education, it has become quite common for college and university mission statements to claim that, upon graduation, their students will be engaged, global citizens. What these institutions are likely trying to articulate is that, upon graduation, their students will be able to navigate successfully various aspects of culture, their own as well as other cultures, in society and the workplace. In some cases, institutions have articulated such a statement without clearly identifying how a student becomes a global citizen. One path to global citizenship is through the development of intercultural skills, otherwise known as intercultural competence.

Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) and Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity have influenced much of the current thinking about intercultural competence. Deardorff (2004) and Bennett (1996) provide insight on how students experience both their own culture as well as cultures with which they would likely engage on a community college campus. According to Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) one's level of intercultural competence depends on attitudes, knowledge, comprehension and skills. In a community college context, students who exhibit intercultural competence would be open to culturally different students; they would use this openness to learn more, and to decode cultural

cues in order to determine appropriate actions or behaviors. For example, a student might have a baseline knowledge of another culture, and he or she would work on further developing this knowledge. Then, they would use this knowledge to make sense of or interpret cultural actions observed in a student from that culture. Finally, the student would use knowledge and comprehension of the other student's culture as a basis for how to interact with the student. In some ways, this is an oversimplified example of how a student uses intercultural competence to navigate culture. From an educator's point of view, Deardorff's (2004) model provides a road map for understanding intercultural experiences and can be used to identify learning opportunities to enhance the intercultural skills of students. From a community college leader's perspective, Deardorff's (2004) model can be used to frame internationalization plans as a tangible and necessary outcome for students' intercultural competence.

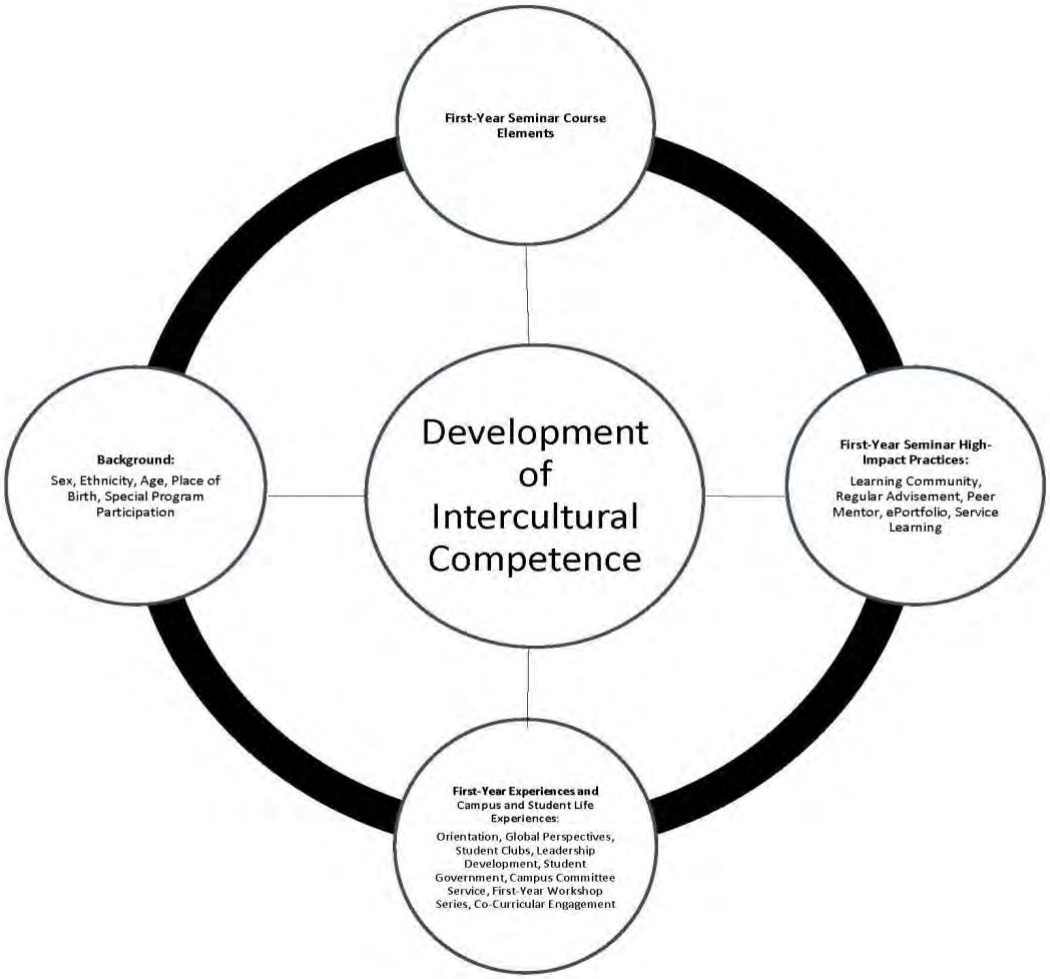
Like Deardorff's (2004) model of intercultural competence, Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) was developed to facilitate an understanding of why people behave as they do when confronted by cultural difference. Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) was designed to facilitate an understanding of why people behave as they do when confronted by cultural difference. According to Bennett (1993), the model is derived from many of the prevailing concepts in the field of intercultural communication. The term "developmental" indicates that there is some sequencing involved for the student with respect to their understanding of intercultural sensitivity. Bennett's (1993) model is broken into two stages, ethnocentric (denial, defense and minimization) and ethnorelative (acceptance, adaptation, and integration).

This study was framed upon Deardorff's (2006) definition of intercultural competence. Although intercultural researchers continue to struggle with a common definition, intercultural competence can be summarized as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). Beyond the definition of intercultural competence, the conceptual framework for this study is rooted in Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) and Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. The reason for pairing the work of Deardorff (2004) and Bennett (1996) is that their research complemented the overall study. Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) forms the backbone of the intercultural development inventory (IDI) while Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) is more instrumental in exploring student actions that relate to change in intercultural competence. In other words, Bennett's DMIS (1996) can describe where a student is situated in terms of intercultural sensitivity but Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (2004) can illuminate student actions that impact change in intercultural competence.

Research Question

The central research question this study addresses is: *How is the development of intercultural competence related to aspects of a first-year seminar course and other first-year experiences among students at a large, urban community college?*

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework on which this study is based. The focal concept, change in intercultural competence is the core of this study.

Development of Intercultural Competence

In some institutions, research on change in intercultural competence may be related to an institution's international efforts, with the goal of assessing whether such efforts have an impact on students' intercultural learning and development. Since the institution under investigation did not have an established internationalization structure at this time, the study focused on change in intercultural competence through the lens of a first-year seminar program where students had multiple opportunities to engage in unintentional intercultural learning.

The rationale for this approach was based on two factors. First, the institution was engaged with the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education in 2012 as part of their Foundations of Excellence (FoE) self-study and action-planning process, focused on the first-year experience. This process, which engaged the entire campus community, led to the development of a first-year initiative (FYI) designed to impact the success of all first-year students at the college. The heart of the initiative was and remains the first-year seminar (FYS), a two-hour, one credit course with high-impact practices designed to connect first-year students to the institution and to retain them beyond the first year of college. The course provides students with a traditional orientation to the college and co-curricular experience and with an introduction to academic content introduced through high-impact course practices. Second, and perhaps most relevant to the focus of this study is that, though intercultural competence or intercultural learning was not an explicit outcome of the FYS course, course surveys

conducted at the end of each semester by the Office of Institutional Research indicated that the majority of students taking FYS reported that the course prepared them to interact effectively with students from other cultures. In other words, something was happening in the class that seemed to facilitate intercultural communication, connection and perhaps even intercultural learning. Exploring this dynamic led to more questions about how and when intercultural learning takes place and how colleges can consider bout how to embed and enhance intercultural learning in such courses, outside of what is traditionally understood as internationalization. It is possible that the high-impact practices embedded in FYS are factors that contribute to intercultural competence.

As in other fields of research, the literature on intercultural competence is rife with intense debate about what intercultural competence is, how to define it, and how it can be learned or developed. Researchers in this area generally view intercultural competence as both a goal and a desired outcome of internationalization, and these ideas have been researched from a variety of perspectives. According to Bennett and Bennett (2004), "the intercultural skillset includes the ability to analyze interaction, predict misunderstanding, and fashion adaptive behavior. The skillset can be thought of as the expanded repertoire of behavior—a repertoire that includes behavior appropriate to one's own culture, but which does not thereby exclude alternative behavior that might be more appropriate in another culture" (p. 7). In other words, throughout the academic experience, in and out of the classroom, students are learning about culture, how to decode cultural cues, and how to respond to a variety of cultural situations. One could argue that there are specific elements or high-impact practices that may in fact be the key to development and change in intercultural competence.

Several factors that may influence change in intercultural competence are included in this study. These are first-year seminar theme, high-impact practices embedded within the first-year seminar course, student participation in first-year experiences and campus and student-life experiences, and students' background.

First-Year Seminar Course Elements

First-year-seminar course elements refer to the course theme or content under which the first-year seminar course is being taught as well as the status of the instructor. All first-year seminar courses at this institution cover common topics consistent with first-year student needs including note-taking and textbook-reading strategies, time management, and study skills. Additionally, students explore their academic and career goals and learn about campus resources. Where first-year seminar courses differ is in the course theme. At this institution, there are typically 35 first-year seminar courses offered each semester that cover roughly 17 unique themes. Examples of current first-year seminar course themes are: student empowerment, community engagement, criminal justice, identity and community, cultures of disability, community health, nutrition, and technology.

In addition to course theme, the other first-year seminar course element considered is the status of the instructor. At this institution, the first-year seminar course is taught by full-time faculty representing a diverse group of academic departments, full-time student-affairs faculty, and full-time administrators serving as adjuncts, as well as part-time adjuncts serving in no other role at the college. In looking at first-year seminar elements, this study considers whether or not course themes and instructor status have demonstrated any relationship to students' change in intercultural competence.

First-Year Seminar High-Impact Practices

There is a wealth of research available on first-year seminars. The majority of this research is rooted in first-year seminars as a retention tool from Year One to Year Two in college. Additionally, considerable research exists on high-impact course practices such as learning communities, regular advisement, peer mentoring, e-Portfolio use and service learning, but not necessarily as collective elements of a single course. No previous research has examined the relationship between these practices and intercultural competence. Each of these high-impact practices was included in this study because they are were elements of the FYS course offered at this institution.

First-Year Experiences and Campus and Student Life Experiences

All students enrolled in the first-year seminar were expected to attend a number of orientation activities as well as co-curricular programming offered through the Office of Student Life in collaboration with Academic Affairs. The co-curricular offerings included a series entitled *Global Perspectives*. Intended to supplement classroom learning and enhance global and intercultural understanding, this series, open to all students but geared to the first-year experience, provided exposure to internationally themed films, lectures and forums. It also invited exploration of a number of local and global issues including terrorism, religion, environment and sustainability, and culture and gender. First-year students also had opportunities to participate in clubs, leadership development, student government, campus committee service, and the first-year workshops series.

Background

The demographic and academic variables included in this study are gender, age, ethnicity, student status (first-time, international, and undocumented) and engagement

with special programs, including: College Discovery (CD), College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE) program, and the Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP). These variables reflect key characteristics of first-year students at this institution.

Methodology

Intercultural competence is a complex concept with many nuances best understood from multiple sources of data derived through mixed-methods research. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) provides an individual profile, which indicates where a person is situated on the intercultural development continuum, but it would be difficult to draw any conclusions about students' intercultural competence from only IDI scores. These profiles give a quantitative indication of students' intercultural competence while the qualitive aspect of this study, semi-structured interviews, provides insight into students' experiences. Together, they form a solid framework for understanding students' development of intercultural competence.

Mixed-Methods Research

A pragmatic worldview provided the philosophical basis for this study. A pragmatic worldview places emphasis on the research problem and all the means of collecting and analyzing data to understand the problem (Creswell, 2014). This worldview supported a mixed- methods approach to the research problem.

Mixed-methods research entails the collection of quantitative and qualitative data with the expectation that both forms of data will be analyzed to address the proposed research question (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, a mixed-methods design takes into account the timing of collection for both forms of data as well as the weight assigned to each (Creswell, 2014). In other words, in developing the study design, the researcher decides if the two forms of data will be collected simultaneously or at different times and whether each database will be considered equally or unequally. Mixed methods are a relatively new approach to research, developed in the late 1980s. The fields of social

sciences, management, education and evaluation were among the first adopters of mixed-methods research (Creswell, 2014).

A mixed-methods approach offered a number of advantages. To learn more about the connection between a community college first-year seminar course and change in students' intercultural competence, the study employed interviews with students about their curricular and co-curricular engagement. This approach added context to students' intercultural development inventory scores and the experiences that influence first-year students' intercultural competence. In other words, the IDI and semi-structured interviews measured the students' level of intercultural competence and provided some information about their campus experiences, while their stories, gained though the interview process, provided insight into the elements of a first-year seminar course and the elements of a first-year community college experience that shape intercultural competence.

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

The primary instrument used in this study was the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, 2003). The IDI is a 50-item instrument that measures an individual's worldview toward cultural difference. In addition to the standard 50 questions, the IDI also allows for the addition of six custom, close-ended questions.

The IDI, a proprietary instrument, is a well-known tool in the field of intercultural learning for measuring change in intercultural competence. Hammer (2011) writes, "The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is an assessment tool that measures the level of intercultural competence/sensitivity across a developmental continuum for individuals, groups, and organizations and represents a theoretically grounded measure of this

capability toward observing cultural differences and commonalities and modifying behavior to cultural context" (p. 475). Most frequently used in higher education settings to measure the impact of study abroad on students' intercultural learning, the IDI has not been used before to assess change in intercultural competence in relation to a first-year seminar at a community college.

Each administration of the IDI generates an individual profile report that outlines participants' orientations toward cultural differences and similarities. It is often used as a tool to help individuals develop awareness of their orientations or perspectives which they can then apply to any cultural situation, personal or professional. The individual profile report is usually shared with the participant by a Qualified Administrator. Typically, the Qualified Administrator provides an overview of the IDI, discusses what the results suggest based on one's intercultural experiences, and explores ways one can improve their intercultural competence. Given the nature of this study, IDI results were not shared with student participants.

Initial and later IDI results were used to learn about the development of students' intercultural competence over the course of their first semester in college. I made the decision to focus on three elements of the IDI profile: students perceived developmental orientation, their actual developmental orientation and their leading orientations. This information underscores where students perceive themselves to be on the intercultural development continuum, their actual developmental orientation, and the direction in which they are moving in terms of their potential intercultural mindset. These three measures underscore how students respond when they encounter cultures that are

different from their own as well as those that are similar to or the same as their own culture.

Figure 2: Initial Interview Protocol

1. I'm really interested in your experience with the start of college. Tell me how it's been going.
    a. What are some of the high points so far?
    b. low points
2. Now I'm going to ask some basic questions
    a. What is your major?
    b. What degree are you pursuing (AA, AS, AAS, CERT)
    c. How many credits are you taking this term?
    d. Have you ever attended college before?
        i. If so, tell me about your previous college.

        (when / where / how long / etc.)
3. I'd really like to hear about your classes.
    a. What classes are you taking?
    b. Which First-Year Seminar are you taking?
    c. What do you think of the First-Year Seminar so far? / What is your impression of the course so far?
    d. What do you think you will find useful or valuable in the course?
    e. Is there anything about the course that you don't like, at this point?
4. Could you please tell me a little about your family's experience with college?

    Parents / Guardians / Grandparents / Cousins / Siblings / Other relatives
5. I'd really like to learn more about your experience with people from other cultures.
    a. How do you know someone is culturally different from you?

   i. When you encounter someone culturally different from you, how do you interact with them? Can you give me an example?
   ii. Do your interactions depend on the person's culture?

b. Could you tell me about how people treat you, based on their perception of your culture?

c. Could you please tell me about a time you experienced a cultural conflict with someone?
   i. What happened?
   ii. What do you think happened?

Figure 3: Later Interview Protocol

1. I'm really interested in your experiences with your first semester of college. Now that you are only a few weeks from the end of your first semester, tell me about your semester overall.
    a. What were the high points?
    b. Low points?
2. Now I'm going to ask you some basic questions.
    a. Did you change your major this semester or do you have plans to change your major?
    b. Did you make any changes to your course schedule?
3. Describe your overall experience in your First-Year Seminar (FYS) course.
    a. What was your overall impression of the course?
    b. What did you find most useful or valuable in the course?
    c. What did you find challenging about the course?
    d. Describe any opportunities you had to get to know and work with students in your FYS class.
4. I'd really like to learn more about your experience with students from other cultures on campus and/or in your first-year classes.
    a. Could you tell me what these experiences have been like?
    b. Is there one particular interaction that stands out in your mind?
    c. Do you have another story about a specific interaction?
    d. How do you feel about these interactions?
    e. Do you think that other students treat you differently based on their perception of your culture compared to the start of the semester? Please explain.

f. Do you think that students from other cultures treat you differently, compared to the start of the semester? Please explain.

g. Which classes, if any, best prepared you to interact with students culturally different from you?

h. Why do you think this is the case?

Student Experience Checklist

Introduction: There is always a lot of variation in terms of how involved students are – and some students don't get involved with campus and student life until much later in college.

5. Please check each of the following that you attended or participated in this semester, either as part of your first-year seminar or as part of the first-year experience.

Please check each item that was part of your first-year seminar.

_____Were you part of a Learning Community?

_____Did you receive regular academic advisement?

_____Was there a peer mentor in your class?

_____Did you use e-Portfolio as part of your FYS course?

_____Did you participate in Service Learning, Special Projects or Leadership activities as part of your FYS course?

_____Did anything about the course prepare you to interact with students from other cultures? Please explain.

Please check each item that was part of your first-year experience.

_____Did you participate in New Student Orientation?

_____Did you attend Freshman Convocation?

_____Did you attend any First Year/Student Success Workshops?

_____Did participating in any of these first-year experiences prepare you to interact with students from other cultures? Please explain.

Please check each item that was part of your <u>campus and student life experience.</u>

_____Did you participate in any student clubs? (If so, which?)

_____Did you participate on a campus sports team?

_____Did you attend any leadership workshops?

_____Did you participate in student government?

_____Did you serve on a campus committee?

_____Did you participate in any volunteer activities?

_____Did you have a work-study job on campus?

_____Did you participate in any cultural co-curricular campus events related to Hispanic Heritage, International Students, Disability Awareness, other Multicultural Events, the LGBTQ community, or the Urban Male Initiative?

_____Did you attend any social events on campus such as dances, concerts, student parties, poetry slam?

_____Did participating in any of these student life activities prepare you to interact with students from other cultures? Please explain.

6. Reflecting on the checklist you just completed, tell me more about the activities/events that put you in contact with students from other cultures.
    a. Which of these, if any, led you to think differently about students from other cultures?

b. In these activities/events, what were you experiences with students from other cultures like?

c. Do you have any illustrations or stories about your interactions with students from other cultures?

7. Is there anything else you want to add?

The study included an initial interview (See Figure 2) conducted during week two of the study and a later interview, completed during week fourteen of the study. The initial interview included a dialogue with student participants about their first weeks in college and the experience of family members in college. Some questions explored student demographics including gender, age group and ethnicity. Final questions explored student identity and engagement with special campus programs. The later interview (See Figure 3) allowed students to speak about their first semester in college and their experience in a first-year seminar course. Students had the opportunity to talk about their instructor, course theme, and special features of the class. The later interview concluded with questions about engagement with other first-year college activities.

Initial and later interview questions were designed to establish a rapport with students in order to learn more about their first-year experiences in college, the first-year seminar course, and their cultural encounters and experiences. The expectation was that the interviews, when paired with results of the IDI, would illustrate the relationship between first-year experiences, the first-year seminar course and intercultural development.

Data Collection

The data from this study originated from a public, urban community college located in New York City. According to the 2015 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, this community college was classified as a large, urban, 2-year public institution. Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from fall 2014 showed the overall student population at 11,506. First-time, degree seeking students totaled 14 percent. The ethnic breakdown was 64 percent Hispanic and 28 percent Black or African-American (IPEDS, 2014). Women constituted

a student majority at 56 percent, and 71 percent of the student population was under 24 years of age (IPEDS, 2014). The first-to-second year retention rates of full-time, first-time degree-seeking undergraduates was 61 percent. Data from 2013-2014 show that 87 percent of full-time, first-time, degree or certificate seeking undergraduate students received federal financial aid, otherwise known as Pell Grants (IPEDS, 2014).

In collaboration with the Offices of Academic Affairs, Institutional Research and the First-Year Experience (FYE) program at this institution, I had the necessary support in place to facilitate data collection, which took place in the fall semester of 2017. Data collection involved the administration of Hammer's Intercultural Development Inventory (2003) at two points during the semester: in the second week of the fall semester and the fourteenth week of the fall semester in 2017. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the same intervals.

The IDI was administered to students electronically during the interview process. During the interview, students received a unique username and password to access the instrument, which took approximately 20 minutes to complete. This was the only format allowable for utilizing the IDI for research purposes.

The target population for the study was 50 students. Fourteen students agreed to participate in the study and 10 completed the study. In Fall Semester 2017, there were 52 sections of the first-year seminar. I selected 11 sections to be part of the study. The selection was based on two factors: course theme and course instructor. I selected courses with themes tied to aspects of the institution's global initiative: global awareness, tolerance and understanding, globalization and the economy, global women, global health, international culture, international students, literacy and education and

sustainability and the environment. Additionally, I included sections taught by instructors who were part of the global initiative.

Once the 11 first-year seminar course sections were identified, I communicated this information to the Office of Institutional Research and they coordinated email outreach, on my behalf, to the students registered in these sections. On four occasions during the first three weeks of Fall Semester 2017, the Office of Information Technology sent a recruitment email from me to the target student population, a group of roughly 300 students. The recruitment email included an electronic form that students used to indicate their interest and share their contact information. Once students responded to the electronic form, I reached out to them via email and formally invited them to participate in the study.

The first-year seminar cohort or study participants were identified on the basis of enrollment in the first-year seminar and a set of pre-enrollment characteristics: zero accumulated credits, zero grade point average (GPA), and registration for a minimum of 12 credits (full-time status). Participants, projected to be 50 students, were identified with the support of the Institutional Research office.

Institutional Review Board Approval

In September 2017, I submitted a research plan to the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB). I received initial approval from the IRB on September 15, 2017 and final approval on September 29, 2017 after making a modification to the semi-structured interviews. I did not have any contact with research subjects until after the IRB's final approval was secured.

Data Analysis

The IDI was administered to students electronically, allowing for access to completed IDI reports within a short period of time, approximately two weeks. In 2013, I participated in a three-day IDI qualifying seminar to become a certified IDI Qualified Administrator. This seminar was required by IDI, LLC to undertake doctoral research using the IDI. Beyond the requirement, it provided me with the proficiency necessary to understand the IDI. As a Qualified Administrator of the IDI, I received near immediate results on respondents, including: a group report, an individual report and an intercultural development plan for each student who completed the IDI. Group reports included demographic and statistical group summaries as well as the group's Perceived Orientation, Developmental Orientation, Orientation Gap, Training Orientations, Leading Orientations, and Cultural Disengagement (IDI, v3, 2007-2011). Individual reports included a demographic summary as well as the student's Perceived Orientation, Developmental Orientation, Orientation Gap, Training Orientations, Leading Orientations, and Cultural Disengagement (IDI, v3, 2007-2011). The Intercultural Development Plan provides an opportunity for each student to learn about their cultural challenges, understand their developmental orientation and identify opportunities for developmental learning to expand and increase their intercultural competence. Since the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between a first-year seminar course and change in students' intercultural competence, students in this study were not presented with their intercultural development plan. **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Mixed methods research allows the researcher to consider a research question from multiple perspectives. In this study, there was one quantitative component, the IDI, and one qualitative component, semi-structured interviews. The addition of semi-

structured interviews was intended to illuminate any findings that may explain the influence on students' intercultural competence.

Interview data were collected and analyzed through thematic content analysis. Interviews were audio-recorded, with permission from each student, and then transcribed. The researcher read through all the interview data to gain a comprehensive understanding of all responses. Next, the data were organized by content or theme areas, then coded by hand, and then entered into a Microsoft Word table for further analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The central question this study examines is: How is the development of intercultural competence related to aspects of a first-year seminar course and other first-year experiences among students at a large, urban community college? This chapter begins by reviewing the nature of the study and introducing the characteristics and demographics of student participants. It then presents analyses of students' Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) scores. Finally, it presents findings from the interviews conducted within the first five weeks of the Fall semester 2017 and again during weeks 11 to 15 of the Fall semester 2017.

The study employed a mixed-methods research design to address the central research question. Research participants were invited to participate in a semester-long study, including administration of the IDI, during weeks three to five and again during weeks 11 to 15. Each IDI administration was accompanied by an interview, designed to gather information about initial First-Year Seminar experiences and, later, students' overall experience in the First-Year Seminar course and their first semester of college.

To examine the experiences of first-year, first-semester students, interview questions addressed primarily the focal variable, development of intercultural competence. In the initial interview, students were also asked demographic questions as well as some questions about starting college. In the later interview, students also reflected on their first semester in college overall, including engagement in first-year-experience programming and campus and student-life participation.

Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents students' background data. Fourteen students participated in the initial phase of this study and 10 students completed both the initial and the later phase of the study. Among them, eight students self-identified as female and six students self-identified as male. Students ranged in age from 18 to 25. Four students were 22-25 years old, while 10 students were 18-21 years of age. All of the students were first-time, first-year freshman. Students were also asked to self-identify their race or ethnicity. The study included six Dominican students, one Hispanic student, one Black-African-American student, one Puerto Rican Student, one Ecuadorian-Hispanic student, two Bangladeshi students, one Guyanese student and one Jamaican student. Students noted their places of birth as Ecuador, Jamaica, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, Manhattan New York City and The Bronx New York City.

Table 2 presents findings on students' participation in various First-Year Seminars. The students in this study were enrolled in seven different first-year seminar course sections including, Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights? Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choices; Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College; Graphic Narratives: History and Memoir in the Graphic Novel; Understanding the Balancing Act Between Society and Science; Language, Identity and Community: Examining How the Languages We Speak and the Communities We Live in Shape Us; and Positive Psychology.

Table 3 presents findings on students' participation in First-Year Seminar (FYS) course elements. These are practices rooted in the FYS course such as regular academic advisement, having a peer mentor embedded in the class, use of ePortfolio, being part of

a learning community, and service learning, special projects or leadership activities as part of the course. All students reported receiving regular academic advisement, having a peer mentor embedded in their class and using ePortfolio. Seven students indicated that their course was part of a learning community and five students participated in service learning, special projects or leadership activities in the course.

Table 4 presents findings on students' participation in first-year and campus and student life experiences. In terms of first-year campus experiences, this includes participation in new student orientation, attendance at freshman convocation and attendance at one or more first-year workshops. Eight students in this study participated in new student orientation while only four attending freshman convocation or participated in one or more first-year workshop.

Table 1: All Study Participants' Background (N=14)

	Number
Sex	
Female	8
Male	6
Ethnicity	
Dominican	6
Bangladeshi	2
Hispanic	1
Black African-American	1
Puerto Rican	1
Ecuadorian-Hispanic	1
Guyanese	1
Jamaican	1
Age	
18-21	10
22-25	4
Place of Birth	
The Bronx, NYC	5
Dominican Republic	3
Bangladesh	2
Manhattan, NYC	2
Ecuador	1
Jamaica	1

Table 1: All Study Participants' Background (N=14) (Continued)

Special Programs Participation	
Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)	11
City University of New York (CUNY) Start	8
Single Stop	3
Disability Services	3
Language Immersion Program (LIP)	2
Veteran's Services	1
College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE)	1

Table 2: Distribution by Participation in First-Year Seminar Theme (N=14)

Course Sections	Number
Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights?	5
Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choices	3
Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College	2
Graphic Narratives: History and Memoir in the Graphic Novel	1
Understanding the Balancing Act Between Society and Science	1
Language, Identity and Community: Examining How the the Languages We Speak and the Communities We Live in Shape Us	1
Positive Psychology	1

Table 3: Distribution by First-Year Seminar Elements (N=10)

Course Elements	Number
Received Regular Academic Advisement	10
Peer Mentor Embedded in Course	10
Use of ePortfolio in Course	10
Course was part of a Learning Community	7
Course Prepared Student to Interact with Students from Other Cultures	6
Service Learning, Special Projects, Leadership Activities in Course	5

Table 4: Study Participants' First-Year and Campus and Student Life Experiences (N=10)

	Number Who Agreed or Participated
First Year Campus Experiences	
Number Who Agreed that First-Year Experiences Prepared Them to Interact with Students from Other Cultures	**4**
Participated in New Student Orientation	8
Attended Freshman Convocation	4
Attended One or More First-Year Workshops	4

	Number Agreed or Participated:
First Year and Campus and Student Life Experiences	
Campus and Student Life Experiences Prepared Student to Interact with Students from Other Cultures	**3**
Participation in Social Events	3
Participation in Student Clubs	2
Participation in Co-Curricular Cultural Programs/Events	2
Participation in Sports Team	0
Participation in Leadership Workshops	0
Participation in Student Government	0
Participation in Campus Committee	0
Participation in Volunteer Activities	0
Participation in Work-Study Job	0

Analytic Results

To examine students' development of intercultural competence over the course of their first semester in college, this study is focused on the following IDI measures from students' initial and later IDI profiles: ***developmental orientation and cultural disengagement***. These IDI elements were selected because the study is focused on reporting IDI results at two distinct points in time: at the beginning of the first semester of college and at the end of the first semester of college.

The IDI, a cross-culturally valid and reliable assessment of intercultural competence, supported the quantitative component of this study. The IDI assesses a participant's intercultural competence-orientation. Each orientation is positioned on the intercultural-development continuum based on Bennett's (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity with the following stages: denial, polarization which also includes defense and reversal, minimization, acceptance; and finally adaptation. These orientations indicate whether a participant possesses a monocultural or intercultural/global mindset at the time of the IDI administration. For example, those with a monocultural mindset are more likely to understand cultural differences and similarities through the lens of their own cultural traditions and values. They may also identify cultural differences through the use of stereotypes, and they may approach cultural understanding simplistically. Their orientations are denial, polarization and minimization. Some may demonstrate acceptance or adaptation, orientations more commonly associated with an intercultural/global mindset. In this case, one makes sense of cultural differences and similarities based on one's own culture but may also seek meaning and understanding from other cultures. Additionally, cultural differences may be translated through the use of cultural

generalizations. In contrast, those with an intercultural or global mindset are more likely to have complex cultural experiences and insights.

The IDI also provides information about one's level of cultural disengagement. Cultural disengagement is not an aspect of intercultural competence on the intercultural development continuum, but it provides insight into how one relates to one's own culture as well as to other cultural groups. It is important to understand that one does not move through each of these orientations in a linear pattern. Individuals move in and out of stages based on their experiences.

The Intercultural Development Inventory was administered to each participant as part of the interviews. The purpose of including the IDI in the initial interview was to establish a baseline for each students' level of intercultural competence. In the later interview, students were asked about their overall experiences in their first semester of college, their overall experience in their first-year seminar course, and their intercultural interactions over the semester. The IDI was repeated during the later interview to measure changes in students' level of intercultural competence over the course of the semester.

In both the initial and later IDI administration, all student participants overestimated their perceived orientation, that is, their level of intercultural competence. In other words, they all thought they were more adept at assessing and adapting to cultural differences from their peers than they were in actuality. This is not uncommon, but it is noteworthy that this occurred at both points during the semester. The measure of the IDI that indicates participants' actual orientation is the developmental orientation.

Students' developmental orientation is presented in Table 5. Over the course of the semester, five students showed no change in their developmental orientation. Within this group, three students' development orientation at the start and end of the semester was polarization and the other student's developmental orientation was minimization at both points in the semester. One student showed backward movement in their developmental orientation. In this case, they started out in polarization and moved to denial. Finally, four students experienced progress in their developmental orientation. This means they moved in the direction of an intercultural mindset. One student in this group started out with a developmental orientation of denial and moved to minimization by the end of the semester. One student started at a developmental orientation of denial and moved to polarization and two students started with a developmental orientation of polarization and moved to minimization by the end of the semester.

Another interesting measure of the IDI is one's leading orientation or the orientation that students are moving toward in relation to their intercultural development. The leading orientation in the IDI is the orientation directly in front of the developmental orientation, the next step one takes in furthering one's intercultural development. In the initial IDI at the start of the semester, three students had a leading orientation of polarization through minimization. This means that they may experience polarization when they encounter cultural differences. This polarization can manifest as a reaction of defense; they be less critical of their own culture but exceedingly critical of other cultures. Six students had a leading orientation of minimization to acceptance on their initial IDI. Only one student's leading orientation was acceptance through adaptation. These findings suggests that all had the potential to move into more of an intercultural

mindset, but, overall, seven were actually moving into acceptance or adaptation, suggesting a strong potential for intercultural growth and development.

The last measure of the IDI to be considered for discussion is cultural disengagement which is considered a separate aspect of the IDI and it is not part of the intercultural development continuum. Cultural disengagement is a separate dimension of the IDI. However, it does provide insight into how people relate both to their own cultural group as well as to other cultural groups. A closer look at students' level of cultural disengagement at the start and end of the semester (See Table 6) shows that students were divided between resolved and unresolved cultural disengagement. Three students were resolved at the start and end of the semester, four students moved from unresolved to resolved, two students moved from resolved to unresolved and one student remained unresolved throughout the semester. Once again, we see some change, some consistency, and some growth at the conclusion of the semester with seven students being resolved by the end of the term. This finding suggests that these seven students had resolved feelings toward their own cultural group at the end of the semester.

Moving beyond the IDI, it is important to consider the other elements of the study such as the first-year experience and the first-year seminar.

Table 5: Study Participants' IDI Scores on Developmental Orientation, Initial and Later Tests (N=10)

	Later IDI Score			
Initial IDI Score:	Denial	Polarization	Minimization	Acceptance
	Adaptation			
Adaptation				
Acceptance				
Minimization			1	
Polarization	1	4	2	
Denial		1	1	

Table 6: Study Participants' IDI Scores on Cultural Disengagement, Initial and Later Tests (N=10)

	Later IDI Score	
Initial IDI Score:	Unresolved	Resolved
Unresolved	1	4
Resolved	2	3

At the close of the later interview, students were asked to complete a student-experience checklist. The checklist was organized into three sections with the intention of capturing information about student experiences that were embedded in their first-year seminar course, experiences that were part of their first-year experience, and campus and student life experiences in which they may have taken part.

The first-year seminar elements checklist (See Figure 3) queried students about five specific elements of their course. For example, they were asked if their first-year seminar was part of a learning community. They were also asked to indicate if they received regular academic advisement as part of their course, if they were required to use ePortfolio, and if a peer mentor was embedded in their class. Additionally, they were asked if service learning, special projects or leadership activities were expectations of the course. The final item on the checklist asked students if anything about the course prepared them to interact with students from other cultures. All respondents indicated that they received regular academic advisement, a peer mentor was embedded into their class and they were required to use ePortfolio. Seven students indicated that their course was part of a learning community and five indicated that they were expected to engage in service learning, special projects or leadership activities as part of the course. Six students stated that the course prepared them to interact with students from other cultures.

Items on the checklist related to first-year and campus and student-life experiences (See Table 4) included four questions. Students were asked if they participated in new student orientation, freshman convocation and if they engaged in any first-year student success workshops. The final question, repeated on each of the three checklists, asked students if anything about the course prepared them to interact with

students from other cultures. The number of students who participated in in new student orientation was eight, while four attended freshman convocation and attended first-year student success workshops. The number of students who affirmed that these first-year experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures was four.

The third and final checklist was focused on elements of students' campus and student life experiences (See Table 4). They were asked to share if they participated in student clubs, campus sports teams, leadership workshops, student government, campus committee service, volunteer activities or if they held a work-study job on campus. Additionally, they were asked if they participated in any co-curricular cultural events, social events or other activities where they had opportunities to engage with students from other cultures. No students reported any engagement with sports teams, leadership workshops, student government, campus committee service, volunteer activities or work-study jobs on campus. The number of students who participated in clubs and co-curricular cultural events was two, while three students participated in other social activities or events and three students asserted that these campuses and student life experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures.

Results of the Intercultural Development Inventory in Relation to Other Variables

The results of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) were considered in relation to other variables. These include students' background, first-year seminar theme, first-year seminar high-impact practices, and first-year experiences and campus and student life experiences.

Background

The first independent variable in the conceptual framework is background, which includes students' gender, age, race or ethnicity, as defined by them, place of birth, and engagement in special programs. Each of these variables is considered here in terms of two measures of the IDI, growth in developmental orientation and resolution of cultural disengagement, at the end of the study (See Table 7).

In all, 14 students started the study, with 10 completing both the initial and later portions of the study. In terms of independent variable, gender, students identifying as female showed growth in their developmental orientation, while students identifying as male showed a greater likelihood of having resolved their cultural disengagement by the end of the study. With respect to age, students aged 18-21 showed growth in their developmental orientation and resolved cultural disengagement by the end of the semester. Half of the Dominican students in the study showed growth in developmental orientation, along with the Bangladeshi and Guyanese students. Resolution of cultural disengagement appeared again for Dominican, Bangladeshi, and Guyanese students and one student who identified as Puerto-Rican. Students' resolution of cultural disengagement is reflected in those with birth places of The Bronx, Bangladesh and Manhattan NYC, affirming that Dominican and Bangladeshi students showed more

growth in developmental orientation and they were also more likely to be resolved in terms of cultural disengagement by the end of the study.

The majority of students were participants in a special program, the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) or they received specialized campus support services including CUNY Start, Single Stop, Disability Services, the Language Immersion Program (LIP), Veteran's Services, and the College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE) program (See Table 1). ASAP is an intensive program embedded with academic, social, and financial support to help community college students graduate with an associate's degree in no more than three years. Single Stop is a program offered to all community college students in the system. It is focused on providing students with campus-based support to obtain critical benefits such as nutrition services, health insurance, legal and financial services, and tax preparation assistance for all family members. Disability Services is a support service available to students with a documented disability who may need academic accommodations to succeed in college. The LIP is an intensive, pre-matriculation English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Veteran's Services is a support service for veterans, current service members and their dependents enrolled at the college. Finally, the COPE program is a joint initiative of the university system and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) designed to support students who are receiving government assistance while pursuing an associate's degree.

Table 7: All Study Participants' Background and IDI Results (N=14)

	All	Developmental Orientation Disengagement Growth	Cultural Resolved
Sex			
Female	8	4	3
Male	6	2	4
Ethnicity			
Dominican	6	3	3
Bangladeshi	2	2	2
Hispanic	1	0	0
Black African-American	1	0	0
Puerto Rican	1	0	1
Ecuadorian-Hispanic	1	0	0
Guyanese	1	1	1
Jamaican	1	0	0
Age			
18-21	10	6	6
22-25	4	1	0
Place of Birth			
The Bronx, NYC	5	2	3
Dominican Republic	3	1	0
Bangladesh	2	2	2
Manhattan, NYC	2	1	2
Ecuador	1	0	0

Jamaica	1	0	0

Table 7: All Study Participants' Background and IDI Results (N=14) (Continued)

	All	Developmental Orientation Disengagement Growth	Cultural Resolved
Special Programs Participation			
Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)	11	5	6
City University of New York (CUNY) Start	8	2	3
Single Stop	3	0	0
Disability Services	3	0	0
Language Immersion Program (LIP)	2	2	2
Veteran's Services	1	0	0
College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE)	1	0	0

First-Year Seminar Theme

This study included student participants enrolled in seven different sections of their first-year seminar course (See Table 8). The students who displayed growth in developmental orientation by the end of the semester were enrolled in the following sections: Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights? Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choice, Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College, Understanding the Balance Act Between Society and Science, and Language, Identity and Community: Examining How the Languages We Speak and the Communities We Live in Shape Us. The two female, Bangladeshi students with growth in their developmental orientation were enrolled in the FYS section, Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College.

The FYS courses with students exhibiting resolution of cultural disengagement by the end of the semester included, Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights? Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choice, Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College, and Language, Identity and Community: Examining How the Languages We Speak and the Communities We Live in Shape Us. Students in the sections, Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights? in which two male, Dominican students were registered and Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College in which two Bangladeshi female students took as part of their first semester in college, experienced resolution of cultural disengagement.

First-Year Seminar Elements

According to the conceptual framework, the first-year seminar high impact practices included as independent variables considered whether students received regular

academic advisement, had a peer mentor embedded in their class, used ePortfolio, participated in a learning community, or engaged in service learning, special projects, or leadership activities as part of their course (See Table 9). This information was obtained as part of a student experience checklist, provided during the later interview. As a final question in this section of the checklist, students were asked if the course prepared them to interact with students from other cultures (See Figure 3).

Among the students who experienced growth in their developmental orientation by the end of the semester, five or more students, were the students enrolled in FYS courses where they received regular academic advisement, had a peer mentor embedded in their class, or used ePortfolio as part of their course. The students who showed resolution in their level of cultural disengagement by the end of the semester, at least five, were those with course elements including regular academic advisement, having a peer mentor embedded in their course, used ePortfolio, or their course was part of a learning community. When asked if the course prepared them to interact with students from other cultures, five students who showed growth in developmental orientation responded in the affirmative, whereas six students who experienced resolution of cultural disengagement responded in the affirmative.

First-Year Experiences and Campus and Student Life Experiences

The final element or independent variable on the conceptual framework is first-year experiences and campus and student life experiences. First-year experiences included students' participation in new student orientation, freshman convocation, and attendance at one or more fist-year workshops. This information was gleaned from students as part of a first-year student checklist provided during the later interview where

they were also asked if these experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures (See Figure 3). Campus and student life experiences, also included on the student experience checklist, included students' participation in social events, student clubs, co-curricular or cultural programs and events, sports teams, leadership workshops, student government, student government, campus committee service, volunteer activities or federal work study job (See Figure 3). Again, as part of this checklist, students were also asked if participation in campus and student life experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures.

When considering students' growth in developmental orientation through the lens of first-year experiences, new student orientation stands out. Five students who participated in new student orientation showed growth in their developmental orientation. In terms of students' resolution of cultural disengagement, I considered those experiences with at least five students and this includes seven students who participated in new student orientation, and five students who attending freshmen convocation and one or more first-year workshop. When asked if these first-year experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures, four students who exhibited growth in their developmental orientation and six students who showed resolution in their level of cultural disengagement responded affirmatively.

The campus and student life experiences produced little data related to students growth in developmental orientation or resolution of cultural disengagement due to the fact that most first-year students in this study had limited engagement in campus and student life experiences. For example, only one student who participated in a club showed growth in their developmental orientation. On the other hand, two students who

participated in social events and one student each who participated in clubs or co-curricular or cultural programs and events, experienced resolution of cultural disengagement, and three students felt that these activities prepared them to interact with students from other cultures.

Table 8: Distribution by Participation in First-Year Seminar Theme and IDI Results (N=14)

Course Sections	All	Developmental Orientation Disengagement Growth	Cultural Resolved
Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights?	5	1	2
Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choices	3	1	1
Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College	2	2	2
Graphic Narratives: History and Memoir in the Graphic Novel	1	0	1
Understanding the Balancing Act Between Society and Science	1	1	0
Language, Identity and Community: Examining How the Languages We Speak and the Communities We Live in Shape Us	1	1	1
Positive Psychology	1	0	0

Table 9: Distribution by Study Participants First-Year Seminar Elements and IDI Results (N=10)

	All Disengagement	Developmental Orientation Growth	Cultural Resolved
Course Elements			
Received Regular Academic Advisement	10	6	7
Peer Mentor Embedded in Course	10	6	7
Use of ePortfolio in Course	10	5	7
Course was part of a Learning Community	7	4	5
Course Prepared Student to Interact with Students from Other Cultures	6	5	6
Service Learning, Special Projects, Leadership Activities in Course	5	3	3

Table 10: Study Participants' First-Year and Campus and Student Life Experiences and IDI Results (N=10)

	Number Who Agreed or Participated	Of Those Who Agreed or Participated:	
		Developmental Orientation Growth	Cultural Disengagement Resolved
First Year Campus Experiences			
Number Who Agreed that First-Year Experiences Prepared Them to Interact with Students from Other Cultures	**4**	**4**	**6**
Participated in New Student Orientation	8	5	7
Attended Freshman Convocation	4	3	5
Attended One or More First-Year Workshops	4	3	5

Participated:	Number Who Agreed or Participated	Of Those Who Agreed or Participated: Developmental Orientation Growth	Of Those Who Agreed or Participated: Cultural Disengagement Resolved
First Year Campus and Student Life Experiences			
Campus and Student Life Experiences Prepared Student to Interact with Students from Other Cultures	**3**	**0**	**2**
Participation in Social Events	3	0	2
Participation in Student Clubs	2	1	1
Participation in Co-Curricular Cultural Programs/Events	2	0	1
Participation in Sports Team	0	0	0
Participation in Leadership Workshops	0	0	0
Participation in Student Government	0	0	0
Participation in Campus Committee	0	0	0
Participation in Volunteer	0	0	0

Activities			
Participation in Work-Study Job	0	0	0

Results of Initial Interviews

Over the course of this study, students participated in two, in-person meetings. In week two of the semester, participants were introduced to an initial interview protocol which included questions about their background, first impressions of college, and preliminary impressions about the first-year seminar course. Next, students were asked to reflect on how they engage with students from other cultures and how students from other cultures engage with them. Finally, they were asked to share an example of a cultural conflict they experienced. In this first phase of the study, all 14 recruited students participated.

Experiences in First-Year Seminar Course

During the initial interview, students were asked to share their thoughts and experiences related to their first-year seminar course. The opening question about the course was presented in two parts, *"What do you think of the first-year seminar course so far? What is your impression of the course so far?"* Most students spoke about the college-preparatory nature of the course, their instructor, and the topic associated with their first-year seminar course. A few students expressed ambivalence about the course; others likened it to their high school experience. One student spoke highly about the experience of having a peer mentor embedded in their class, a feature of every first-year seminar section.

A 23-year-old Ecuadorian male student's comments about the college-preparatory nature of the course captures many participants' overall view of the course. He said,

> "I feel like they try to drag on the topics about, like, what we should know, but I feel like most of the kids, they don't care. But it's helpful. It's what you take

> from it. Obviously, if you don't care, you're not going to take much, but if you do, it's there. They're giving you the tools for success. If you don't take advantage of it, you won't benefit at all. It's, like, necessary, and I see it."

A 20-year-old Dominican female student from the Bronx also spoke about the preparatory nature of the course, adding the value of learning about college support resources. She noted,

> "I think it's good because it helps students help manage their, the college, and if you don't know something, they help you. Because I didn't know about a lot of things like some places that I need, that I can go or tutorings that I can take. And they help that I, that I, that the college have here, so like the technicians and those things I didn't know . . ."

One student, an 18-year-old Dominican male studying Recreation Education and residing in Harlem, spoke about how helpful the FYS course was, especially in the first three weeks of classes. He observed,

> "It's been helpful. Helpful because some of the stuff we did in, like, the first three weeks of class helped me with other classes, like my getting my email started up and everything, and just having One Stop Shop eServices [a single, electronic site where students can access student success services]. Now I know how to check my grades, my midterm grades. So that class has helped me with other classes."

A number of students added insights on the topic of their first-year seminar. A Hispanic female studying Nursing said, "And this is honestly an unnecessary class. I don't feel like I need it. But now we're doing the gender role and things, and it started to get a little more interesting. So, it's not going as bad." A 20-year old Bangladeshi female

student noted, “Yeah. The gender role which the course focuses on. I think it really helps us like, you know, express our feelings because people have different opinions.” A Dominican female student studying electronic engineering spoke about her human-rights-themed first-year seminar course, stating,

> “Yes. I think that, I didn’t know a lot of, know the amendments and those things that United States have. I only knew about that. And I can learn about the humans, that price that we have, how sometimes people are treatment, I don’t know how I can say that [laughs]. So, I specific say like I learn about the rights that I have that I didn’t know.”

The same student added, “Yeah. Because, you know, United States, it’s, like, have a lot of things, so here in, we have a lot of opportunities, and sometimes we don’t know things that can help us.” Finally, a 23-year-old self-described Black African-American female student studying psychology noted,

> “I honestly like it. I feel like it, it, because I’m like into political stuff, so I feel like I get to say, and like, you know, get to say, you know, a lot basically because, you know, human rights, and, you know, and all that other stuff, and, like, you know, what’s going on around the world, you know, president stuff. I just, I’m just, like, into stuff like that, so whenever, you know, certain topics come up, I’m just like, “Okay, yes.” You know, I get to, you know, say my opinion and like learn more.”

Another major theme about their initial experience in the first-year seminar was focused on their instructor. For instance, a Dominican female student and member of the Christian Club spoke of the instructor of her gender-themed first-year seminar as follows:

> "It's like, I feel comfortable. Even though it's a one-credit class, you know, it's kind of, for it to be a three, but it's like the way she explains, the way she talks, she makes you feel like you're not just in class."

Another said, "It's fun. Like sometimes we make groups, or, like, we ask, she asks question, and if anybody answer quickly, it's great. It's like a competition. I like competition." This student was a 20-year-old Bangladeshi female student studying Liberal Arts, speaking about her Language, Identity and Community themed first-year seminar course.

The next question students were asked in the initial interview was, *What do you think you will find useful or valuable in the course?* The responses to this question varied across seven different response categories. Students spoke about college resources, class discussions, gender stereotypes, citizenship resources, oral presentations, use of ePortfolio and human rights or global issues. Among these categories, students responded most frequently about either college resources or class discussions.

Eight students spoke about the value of information on college resources in the FYS course. A male student in the human-rights-themed FYS course said,

> "It's that, they're always, like reminding us of the things that, that we have to keep in mind all the time. Like, you've got to, like, let's say you miss one day, you email your professor, and let him know, let him know, if you, why you missed. Well, it's not really necessary to let him know, to let him know why or how do you miss that time, like, to be proactive with your professors. Like, let's say you have an assignment, and you was confused when that, when the professor was explaining. Like be able to email that, email your professor and ask him the

> specific questions and specific stuff of what you're confused about, most likely. So, those are things that, that as a freshman, those are things you can, that class can help you to make, get to the next level for your second semester."

Another student, a female Dominican student from the Bronx stated, "I would say the information that I don't know, like my advisor, and how I can get help with my other classes, if they can help me, and where I can go get the help if I want to." A Dominican female student enrolled in the FYS themed course, *Connecting Cultural Heritage with Success In College,* where folk tales are used to reinforce life lessons, commented,

> "Well, I don't find the folktales very useful. The lessons behind it, I find it very useful, but the need, I don't find the use the folktales very useful because she also, like, makes us read little articles about procrastinating, like things that we as college students should take into consideration, like procrastination, stress, learning how to manage your time and stuff like that. That is what I find useful."

One 20-year-old, female, Bangladeshi student spoke about the value of learning about campus resources in FYS.

> "When you really, like, there are many buildings, like, really hidden, so it's a big college. So, you know, sometimes you may find yourself, you know, not grabbing onto the opportunities, especially like the internships or any volunteer opportunities. You know, sometimes we don't know, like, where to find them or how to apply. So when they talk about it, it's really helpful."

A 23-year-old, self-described Black African-American, female student living in the South Bronx spoke about the value of the theme of her human-rights-themed FYS course and the information she and her classmates receive about campus resources. She stated,

"All right, so useful? All right, not only do we, like, you know, talk about, you know, human rights, you know, what's going on around the world, and, you know, we also talk about basically like the resources on campus. Like, we talk about the resources on campus, what's here: clubs, parties, you know. We also talk about, you know, how important it is to see our advisor and how important it is, you know, to go to class on time. You know, it's just, you know, it just helps, you know, us keep, you know, it helps, it's, they give information, give information to keep us on track about schoolwork and, you know, stuff like that."

The second most frequent responses to the question, *What do you think you will find useful or valuable in the course?* were related to class discussions. A 25-year-old, self-described White Puerto Rican, male student from the Bronx who enrolled in an FYS course focused on graphic novels pondered the question:

> "I guess, that's a loaded question. I would think that it helps me open forms of expression better because I have drawn a graphic novel, and I've never done that. And I have written quite a lot, which I don't do. And it's helped develop my skills definitely in those two sections, so illustration and in writing."

One male student enrolled in the human-rights-themed FYS course spoke about her instructor's role in encouraging classroom discussions. He noted,

> "I like how she wants us to learn how to discuss and, like, like, argue against someone, like, your own point with someone else. Because me as a person, I personally don't really discuss, or argue, or go against someone because everyone's entitled to their own opinion, but I think this makes it more fun trying to like hear everyone's thought on a topic."

A female student enrolled in the FYS course with the theme language, identity and community and who is also engaged in the language-immersion program spoke about the value of doing classwork in English that is focused on her personal experiences. She said, "It's always about like, like, like, I have taken lots of essays, and it's about like my journey." When the interviewer asked her, "About what?", she added, "About my journey, about whether it's home or family or anything. A measure, like that I can express, not like, you know, a topic, and then you have to think about a lot."

The final question in the initial interview related to the FYS course experience was, *Is there anything about the course that you don't like at this point?* This question inspired three types of response. One student felt that the course was not interactive enough. Two students felt that the course required too much writing. The majority of students, however, said that there was nothing that they did not like about the course.

Among the students in the latter category, a 20-year-old, male student in the human-rights-themed FYS class noted, "Well, right now, nothing. Everything has been good so far. There's always something that I could learn in that class, always something." A 20-year-old, female nursing student felt similar, adding,

> "So, everything so far that she's teached has been very helpful. I guess, I found it pointless at first because I didn't think it was necessary. Not that it wasn't helpful, but probably that it wasn't necessary. But what, everything is very, is very helpful."

A female, Dominican student enrolled in the FYS course entitled, Understanding the Balance Between Society and Science noted,

> "Not really. I mean, I already know the information that they're giving us, but I don't feel like, I don't like it, them telling me the information and more that I will learn from what I already know."

A few students, in response to this question, just stated a simple "No." A Latina from the Dominican Republic and living in the Bronx said, "No. I like the teacher's explanation, and, with a lot of activities in the class, it's good". A Black African-American, female student thought, "No. So far there's nothing I don't like. The work is pretty good, you know. It's pretty easy to me, you know."

Intercultural Competence

After background questions and queries about their FYS course, the initial interview questions shifted to students' development of intercultural competence. Specifically, students were asked questions about how they approach cultural interactions with their peers. These questions were intended to provide some additional context on students' intercultural competence.

The first question related to intercultural competence was, *"How do you know if someone is culturally different from you?"* The majority of students indicated that it is one's presentation, which may include language, aesthetic, style or appearance, that provides them with clues about cultural difference. For example, a male student of Puerto Rican descent, noted, "Aesthetics. That is a very big one. I can tell whether someone is, what their religious preference is, or their bi-mental preferences based on their aesthetic". A Dominican female student who came to this country at age seven, commented, "By the way they talk. The way they express themselves and how they dress". Another student added, "I would say the way they dress. And sometimes the way they talk because I'm

Dominican. But if I speak Spanish, my Spanish sounds different from Puerto Rican or Mexican". This same student added, "Okay. I, I've noticed like for me, I dress normally. I don't follow, but I've noticed that some, like how do I put this in words? Like, some, some Hispanics, they wear like their country, their country, like their country flag, like country slogans". One student captured this sentiment by noting, "Like, you know, look at their physical appearance and then added, It could be clothes, it could be, you know their skin color, their hair, anything like that. And, of course, the way they talk, the way they present themselves". Another student, a Dominican male, spoke about how the diversity in their neighborhood and building has influenced how they identify cultural difference:

> "I live in the project buildings and, of course, in projects there's people from all over, Like, there's Chinese people, native, I've met one native American, Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, white people, everybody. So it's, I get, being in the projects so long, I get a sense of when, like, people were different just by, like, how the way they talk, how the way they carry themselves, like, presentation, I guess".

Finally, a second Bangladeshi female participant remarked, "First, their clothes, and their skin color and the language".

Next, a number of students indicated that it was language, way of speaking, accent, dialect or phrasing that helps them identify cultures. For example, a male student who was born in New York City but grew up in the Dominican Republic noted, "It might be the language that they're speaking. That's how you can basically identify where that person is coming from. But based on physical appearance? It's, it's hard". Another

student noted, “A lot of times, it’s their speech. Their speech is way different. Certain languages that they use, the language that they use is completely different. The way they phrase things. You have to ask them, like what that means. When you’re having conversations with someone, and you have to always ask like what that means? How do you say it? It’s, you know, you guys aren’t from the same culture”. One female student noted the way she interprets culture by stating, “I would say the way they dress. And sometimes the way they talk because I’m Dominican, but if I speak Spanish, my Spanish sounds different from Puerto Rican or Mexican”. A Dominican female student commented on how difficult it can be to identify culture, “So, maybe, like, I have a friend from, she’s from Honduras. So the way she speaks, the way she say a lot of things. I say, What are you saying? I don’t understand. And we speak Spanish, you know?”

A few students felt that it is one’s morals or values that established cultural identity. One student remarked, “Also, I have two friends who are, one is from Korea, and the other one is from China, and the way they express themselves and their goals are very different from me academically”. Another Dominican student observed,

> “Well, I wouldn’t say the way they dress, because now many people are starting to dress the same no matter what culture they’re in. But, like, the morals they have. Like, I have a friend that was, that we were, like, really best friends in high school. She even called me ‘*mom*.’ She was Albanian, so her, her culture was basically that she could not marry anybody outside of her, you know, origin. Also, that they were really, like, really, really strict on her. And that’s life.”

Finally, a male student of Dominican descent remarked on the difficulty of identifying cultures based solely on skin color or language:

> "Well, that's a hard question to answer because you actually cannot basis, you only, you cannot base, you can't make an assumption on just because that person is black or just because some person is white or just because that person is only speaking English, or just because that person only speaks Spanish or whatever other language it is. It's hard to, it's hard to identify who, where that person, where anybody come from. Because this place is really diverse, so we don't really know who might be somebody. You might have somebody next to you who is, who looks just like you, but that person might be from a different country".

The next set of questions focused on cultural interactions, starting with the question, *"When you encounter someone culturally different from you, how do you interact with them?"* Some students approached these encounters determined not to offend their peers. For example, one Dominican female student remarked, "Most of the time, I would change the way I talk and think before I say anything about any culture or any point of view about religion or opinions that I know they might have different as me. So if I say something about the Middle East or the war or anything like that I have to think what I'm going to say, so I might not affect their feelings". A Bangladeshi student observed,

> "Let's say, if I'm talking to African American person, of course, because I don't know if that's a stereotype or anything, but, you know, they tend to be more, you know, loud and everything. So I try to be more polite, so that then I'm not making any mistake, and, you know, I'm not, so that they get really, you know, irritated with me".

In response to this question, some students stated that they initiated general conversation when they engaged students culturally different from themselves. One student commented,

> "I've tried to have a conversation, I've tried to have a conversation with them to see how, how it goes, you know, if it's hard to understand them, I'll tell them I don't understand them a little bit, but I don't know. I just couldn't, like, I wouldn't, I don't cut them off. Like I just continue to speak to them, because that's how you get to know people".

A male, Puerto Rican student remarked,

> "I usually dive into very basic things when meeting someone of a different culture, like, 'Oh, what do you like to eat?' And through those small questions, those small and very basic questions, I can, I can get them to talk about their culture and their willingness to share".

In response to this question, however, the majority of student respondents stated that they do not change the way they interact when they engage students culturally different from themselves. A Dominican student participant whose response best represents this perspective commented,

> "I would interact normally. I understand we all are different in our own way, due to our cultural, due to our culture. But I would interact just as I would, just the way I would interact with a person from my background, the same person, the same way I would interact with someone from a different background, like an African American".

A second student felt similarly, adding,

> "I interact with them the same way I interact with everybody. Because, regardless, I don't think a person's culture should determine how you should act towards that person, you know. An example, I guess, is just my friends were all, I have all different types of friends in like my little circle, so it's like we all treat each other the same, as if we're just, we never look, we never look at the culture. And if we do look at the culture, we just kind of, like, use each other's cultures to, like as a gateway. Like some of my friends tries, like, speak like they're from Guyana, and it's kind of funny".

A third student added,

> "Oh, I just try to be myself always. You know, I just want to be me. I don't want to be another person. Because sometimes you do, you try to do it to impress the person. But when you get to know the person, you've got to be comfortable in those things, but I try to be always myself."

The last student who represented this viewpoint, an African-American female, thought, "How do I interact? I mean, I interact, I just be *myself*, you know, I just be *myself*. That's about it. There's no other way I can interact with them by being myself, you know…".

To delve more deeply into students' intercultural interactions, the next question focused on whether or not another person's culture impacted the way students interacted with them. Students were asked, *"Do your interactions depend on the person's culture?"* Interestingly, the majority of students stated that another student's culture had no bearing on their interactions and, perhaps more noteworthy, most students did not elaborate on this question at all, stating a simple, "No" in response. Two students had some additional

thoughts to share. One Dominican female remarked, “Not at all. I speak to everybody the same actually. Like just because you’re from somewhere else, I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t treat you any different”. A second student said,

> “No. Since I came to this campus, like, I’ve met, like, you know, different people, and I just stay the same, like, you know. I treat them the same, talk to them the same, you know. Sometimes I teach them like a few like, you know, you know, slang. It’d be funny. It’d be cool [laughter], yeah. Because they’d be like, ‘What?’ You know, I just teach them a few things.”

The next set of responses came from six students who indicated that they adjust their behavior or approach when encountering students from other cultures. In most cases, they mentioned that these adjustments were based on trying to understand their peers’ perspective. In other cases, they were treading carefully for fear of doing something that might be interpreted as culturally offensive. For example, a Dominican student stated, “Well, there’s always ways to approach somebody. You can always approach somebody the way you approach your mom, the way you approach your brother. There are ways to approach people”. Another student, a Dominican female, described the situation as follows,

> “In high school, most of my friends were between Asia, Middle East and Latin America. And they all would tell me, ‘Oh,’ you speak different from me than you speak the [unclear]. ‘Why?’ And that’s because most of the time, I would have to put myself in their shoes. It depends on what we’re talking about, who we’re talking about and if, it can be about anything”.

This same student also added, “So, I have to think before I say anything about anything. It can be about my friends. It can be about even about what I think about other people”. An 18-year-old, Dominican, female student, enrolled in the *Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choices* section, stated,

> “Yes, it does because I, like I said before, I don’t want to offend someone. Because the way I talk with people from my culture, they might not see it as a, I might not offend them. But if I talk to somebody from another culture, it might be offending to them”.

Another Dominican female summed up her response to this question by noting,

> “It does kind of, but I don’t really, like, there’s a limit, like, it does, but then again I use my own, you know, culture to react back to people. It might change a little bit based on theirs, but I still, you know, use what I’ve, what I have”.

Finally, a Jamaican male, summed up the challenge with the statement,

> “Yes and no. Yes, in the way of how I might have to, like, you know, be viewed if it’s a first impression. Because in some households, there are some parents that they taught their children a certain way, like, in respect, I guess, or, like, how to, in a formal manner. So, I have to act as if, you know, this is my first time meeting a person. I have to be, like, you know, respectful and always just interested, you know. And as a plus, I find out new, you know, experiences and new, I guess, value from that culture, from somebody else”.

Finally, responses came from three students who stated that their interactions with other students depend on culture to some extent. One student said, “Yes and no. It kind of depends on how culturally invested they’re in the culture they were brought up in”. A

Jamaican student summed up his final thoughts on this question with the statement, "I think the only time it would never depend is if I already know the person. If I don't know the person, I have to be cautious on what I say or how I act".

In the next question related to development of intercultural competence, students were asked, *"Could you tell me about how people treat you, based on their perception of your culture?"* One student indicated that they did not notice any change in how they were treated based on others' perceptions of their culture and one student indicated that they were met with curiosity. The majority of students, however, suggested that they experienced some form of negativity such as prejudice or rejection based on other students' perception of their culture.

> Among students who perceived rejection from others, a Puerto Rican male remarked, "So, for a lot of my Hispanic family and friends, they would see me as too westernized, so I kind of was harassed, and that way I was too, sorry, excuse my language, but I was too white to be Hispanic. And then when I do hang out with Caucasian people, and I do have a very Bronx accent outside of this, so when I do talk to them, I guess my Ebonics show. So, now I'm too ghetto to be Caucasian".

An 18-year-old female Dominican student studying radiologic technology shared the following story:

> "Some people treat me as I'm equal as them. Others treat me as I am more likely an alien. Like in my last year of my middle school, I had to transfer from a not-so-good part of Queens to a wealthy part of Queens, and, in the middle school that I went to there were a lot of Asians and whites. And the middle school that I went

to, it was one of the top middle schools in New York City. So I kind of had to lower my voice, speak better, better English, more vocabulary words, and a lot of Asians there, they, because they saw, like, from where I am as a Latina, and I didn't have good grades, it kind of affects the way they view me because they thought that I wasn't good enough to be around them. So that affected a lot".

A third student described her experience with students' perception of her culture in a diverse high school in The Bronx.

"Some of the challenges…Well, back in high school, I was always, since my high school was mostly, basically like full-on minorities, so you would have, it would be, most of them would be African American, Hispanic. And most of the, within the Hispanic, the most would be Dominicans, and every time I, I would speak Spanish, it would be like, 'Omigod. You're Dominican? I didn't notice. I thought, you know, you would speak Spanish all the time, and always speaking Spanish, always do this in Spanish. I thought you would like, the way you speak English is perfectly compared to the way other people who just came like a year ago from D.R. spoke English.' And I would be like, I would think like, Why would they be comparing me to a person, like, we're all different. Just because we come from the same background doesn't mean we all do the same thing.' They would also sometimes call me a 'hick' and all of that stuff and say why would I, they would, and then, within my own culture, they would say, 'Why don't you always hang with us? Like, why are you so, why are you always with African Americans? Why do you always want to hang out with the Mexicans?'"

One student, an African-American female, described an encounter she had with an unknown woman while out with her son. She stated,

> "I mean, I haven't had like a situation like that. But with my kid, I had kind of, like I was, it was like she was from a different, she was from somewhere, I think in Ghana. I'm not too sure. But he had hair, he has hair, he has long hair. And she's like, you know, 'Why your boy has hair? He's not supposed to have hair.' And I'm like, 'What? You know, that's common, you know, in America.' And so, you know, I kind of got offended, but I just brushed it off, because, you know, she's from somewhere else where they don't allow it".

A number of students responding to this question recalled experiences that seemed difficult for them to interpret. For example, one student observed, "And also, because, like, right now I have a tan. So because, because I'm actually really white, people have thought to say that I was Albanian, and I was like, 'Where you got that from?' Some people, they think, like, I'm Puerto Rican as well. Like they, they can't really identify who I am or my culture because of the way I look. So yeah. Because it's like they have their own view of certain type of race".

A male Dominican student described the following interaction:

> "Well, in my experience, people will just treat me the same. But some people, just because you don't speak the same language as you, as them, they start looking at you weird or start looking at you different as everybody else. For example, there was one on the train. I was coming from a basketball game that I had, and there was this lady speaking badly about me just because I was, just because I'm black. But she didn't know, she didn't, she didn't even thought

> about. She was speaking Spanish. She didn't even thought about if I, that I knew, that I know how to speak Spanish. So when I spoke Spanish to her, she got surprised, and she run away. Just because she thought I was from a different country who don't know the language, her [unclear] native language".

Another student who described herself as Hispanic tried to make sense of a situation she experienced with a friend as follows:

> "In this, like, honestly now, like, this generation a lot of people very, are getting very racist with the Spanish people. Not a lot of people like speaking to Spanish people nowadays. Why? I don't know. I don't feel like we did anything wrong. I don't, I don't have friends, but when I did, she, she used to treat me a little bit different. I guess it's because I was Spanish, and she was from Trinidad".

Another student noted,

> "Not a lot of people know I'm Guyanese, so that's just, nobody ever suspects that's what I am. It's either someone thinks I'm mixed, or I'm Hispanic, or I got confused for an Asian one time. So, it's just, I get based off of what other people see from that culture. They don't know, a lot of people don't know what a Guyanese culture or like Caribbean culture. So it's like I don't get that perception".

One male student noted the following scenario:

> "I was in my car with my dad, and since we're both, like, in the summer we will always both get, like, really tan… So, they thought we were, like we had just come from the Dominican Republic. And, like, we didn't know how to talk English and all that stuff because we were just, like, really dark. And, you know,

> sometimes I talk rude to people sometimes that judge me really wrong…Because, like, just ask, you know, like talk to somebody".

An Ecuadorian male student stated,

> "My culture, well, I'm guessing people can't tell where I'm from. So I guess they would approach me like any normal person, or I would hope them to. Maybe if I go somewhere where I'm the minority. I'm like, I think this college is pretty diverse, so everyone is like neutral with each other. But, if you go in a different neighborhood or a different area, I mean, everyone gets stares when you're out of place because obviously, you stick out. It doesn't matter where you're from".

The final question posed to students in the initial interview was, *Could you please tell me about a time you experienced a cultural conflict with someone? What happened? Why do you think that happened?* Most students voiced vibrant stories about cultural conflicts they experienced with a wide range of individuals, from family to friends to school peers. Four participants, however, indicated that they had no such interactions and did not elaborate beyond indicating a clear "No" to this question. Responses from those students who had cultural conflicts of three types. One student related an encounter that was violent in nature, while three other students told about experiences focused on intergenerational cultural conflict. The majority of students who shared stories spoke of confrontations involving some form of cultural assumption or misconception.

A 20-year-old, female, Hispanic nursing student born and raised in the Bronx spoke of harrowing and violent encounters from her experience in high school.

> "In high school there was this group of girls that they were called J Squad. There was a bunch of African American females, and the J Squad, the "J" stood for

> "Jump Squad." And they would go around causing problems with people, and they had this biggest hate towards Spanish people, and they would always choose fights with Spanish girls. And they would have their males to jump Spanish men, and then, like, I'm not. At first I used to think, like, they really have problems with everybody. They hate everybody, but then they started, and when school was ending they explained that they weren't a big fan of Spanish people because we think we're all that, and we know everything. So they felt like that it was, their mentality was like, 'Let's try to beat up and jump every Spanish person that we know.'"

When asked about the reason this happened, the student reflected and then noted, "I felt like they just wanted a specific reason to try and beat people up. I really don't know what's the main, main reason why they would do it. I don't know. They were, there's probably something they just have a grudge against Spanish people."

Three female students from the Bronx, two of Dominican and one of Bangladeshi descent, spoke of intergenerational cultural conflicts, situations in which they felt someone from an older generation held traditional values that were not compatible with values of students in their early 20s. For example, an 18-year old, Dominican female and radiologic technology student said,

> "With one of my Middle East friends, I tried to invite her to my house, and her parents said, 'No.' So it was a school project, so I thought I would go to your house if that's okay with you. She spoke to her mother. Everything was fine. When I get there, three of her family members, they came to the house, and her parents didn't know about. So when they saw me, they started asking why I was

> in their house. I shouldn't be there, and I'm going to affect the way their daughter thought about, like, thought about me or their culture because it was a project about the Islamic empire. And the question, the conversation, it all went into, like, the marriage now . . ."

As the two students worked together, their conversation turned to underage marriage, and the student participant shared her view that underage marriage was illegal. The story continues as the uncle of the student's classmate overhears their conversation:

> "And then her uncle came up to me, and he said that I should leave the house because I was influencing her to think that her culture was bad. And it was into a big argument between her parents and her uncle, because she was talking about how she might leave school because she was going to get married. And at that time, we were 15. And so, I got pissed off, and I started, kind of, I went off myself and started arguing with her, and, like, telling her that she should speak to her parents. But the thing I didn't know was that it was her uncle that was talking about marriage..."

The story ended with the student participant getting into an argument with her classmates' uncle and then walking out of their home in anger. When asked why she thought this happened, she said,

> "I would say because her parents didn't, they were very influenced by the elders in their family. And it's like old traditions, old, basically like the old way they take, it's not, it's the 21st century. They're still back in the 20th century, so it's like they're not, they're trying to adjust the new generation to what the old generation thinks. They think, well, they thought that, which is still at, as, the old,

> like, as the past would do…And the elderly have the rights to do whatever they wanted, and youth didn't have a choice, and youth didn't have a say in it. Any in *my* family, it's not like that."

Another 18-year old Dominican female student shared a story about what happened when one of her cousins married someone outside of their race. She said,

> "Culture, okay. So, my family is very diverse. We all have different, we're all Dominicans in a sense, but some of us are mixed with Asian, Jamaican, African American, Spain. I'm Spaniard. So most, that when, my family, is, not my family, but Dominicans in a whole I would believe, they only want their children to stick with Dominicans. They don't want them to go outside the race. And my, my cousin decided to go outside the race and marry other, another background. And I was like, 'Why are you, why do you want to decide?' And she was like, 'Well, it's because, you know.' I was like, 'I understand where you're coming from,' and then what not. And then, I decided to also, my boyfriend's not Dominican, and that caused a conflict within my family. My parent, my parents were not very supporting of it. They said, 'Why do you have to go another country? Why do you have to go to another culture and find another man when there's a lot, a lot of men in the Dominican community?' And then it wasn't, I felt like my parents weren't supporting me. I felt like my parents were betraying my beliefs, and we had, we had a lot, we had a conflict like that."

In reflecting on the reasons for this conflict or perspective, she indicated, "I don't know. It's just like families, I've always, like, it's been, like, a generation/generation thing.

They've always stuck to their race and their race only because their race is the better race, and there's no need to go meddling around other races."

A 20-year old Bangladeshi female student also spoke about intergenerational cultural conflict. She said,

> "Not really, because I don't, I don't like to talk to people about, like, cultural differences especially with the people that, you know, get really, like, you know, aggressive about it. However, I do like to share my experiences with other people from other culture and, you know, kind of like to hear their experience or their, you know, the type of culture they have. So, but like in my high school after the election, when we talked about cultural conflicts and how, you know, people are not happy with the way things are going with the election and everything….I've heard them saying, you know, that let's say, if it's in the Bronx, there are, you know, African Americans and Spanish. And we think that, you know, they really get along. But a lot of people are saying, 'No. My family do not like Spanish people…'" "…And for, my family do not like African American families."

As she reflected about the reason for these types of cultural conflicts, she considered, "So, I think, you know, even though we, like, we people that go to college or high school, because we're meeting with many people from, like, their diversity, that's why we, we are more open, like open-minded, but our parents aren't…Because they're not going out so much and aren't meeting people, they're not as open-minded as us."

The majority of students articulated stories of cultural conflicts based on some form of cultural assumption or misconception. For example, a 25-year-old, Puerto Rican, male student said,

> "So, one of my friends, she is half Puerto Rican and half West Indian. But she's very adamant about her black roots. And we were having a discussion about the definition of racism is. And when I was young, I always was taught the perception that racism is just a prejudice against any culture, no matter what. But she had a different definition of what racism is, and I was trying to tell her that that's not the defined, that's not the definitive definition of racism. It's more of a systematic racism or institutionalized racism, and she was very deflective and very angry because once again, no one likes to get challenged. And she was very offended by it, and we argued for several hours, and so, she kind of got the idea that there was just a misunderstanding, that she originally looked up the definition online, and it gave her one thing, but a different dictionary gave her another. And I was trying to tell her that, 'No, your way is, your definition isn't wrong. It's just a subbranch of a definition.' You know, because I think there's three major racism words, or definitions for it, but I used the very blunt one, so that I could talk to her about these issues without having to be offended based on what she is. Like, I don't want to get offended, I don't want, if someone talked to me about my culture, I wouldn't want to be offended just because they're questioning it, you know, of having some critique of my race. I wouldn't want that because I don't, there's no progression in that…"

I asked two follow up questions: "So you said you sort of used more of a, like, a standard or generic term so that you could more easily talk about the topic…" and, "What was her definition of racism?". The student responded to the question, also considering the reason this exchange resulted in a cultural conflict:

> "Her definition of racism was very much as a systematic racism, where that a certain group of people are put under on purpose by a superior race, and usually that superior race has the other elements of life that we have which is like health, and money, and popularity, stuff like that. So, when she, when she, when I was talking to her about that, she immediately saw it as me saying that there's no such thing as, like, white people in power that are institutionalizing minorities, like. And it was very strange because I was like, 'I'm not. I don't consider myself less because I'm a minority.' But to her, she already had like this innate way of thinking that, 'Okay, just because I'm black that this is what's going to happen.' And I told her, 'You don't have to be that way. It doesn't have to be like that. You can definitely step out of it, and then be that example.' And that's why I used the very broad definition of racism, so she doesn't tie herself down to her culture and the way that her culture perceives certain terms."

An 18-year-old, male, Guyanese student told a story about a time when he and some friends were in a deli. As he describes it, he was with some friends who spoke Spanish and another friend who was described as black and Jamaican. The Jamaican friend was apparently getting a bit rowdy in the deli, which was run by an older Dominican man. The rowdiness was followed by an incorrect sandwich order. He said,

> "And me and my other friends, we're just laughing. And the deli guy, he, I guess he told the, the chef to, he told something in Spanish, and he like, like they messed up his sandwich for him, so when we left the store, my friend opens his sandwich, and he saw there was like no like mayo and, like, stuff, stuff that he wanted on it. They didn't put it on it. So, yeah, that was about it. But I think it

> was just because like he got rowdy, so, you know. And then he was laughing because some of my friends speak Spanish, so the deli guy was laughing with my friends because they knew, every, they knew what was going on. I was kind of out of, like, the loop. I don't speak Spanish, so that was about it, you know…And he kept saying that it was, he was like, 'It's because I'm black.' You know, like, he was, that was just his point of view."

When he was asked to reflect on why he thought this happened, he spoke about cultural misconceptions and differing opinions about culture within different generations, saying,

> "I mean, it really depends on a person's, like, mindset. I know that from what I've heard from some Hispanic cultures, or if there's a lot of, like, precautions on like African Americans, or like, any type of, like, dark-skinned, black. And some people just, I guess, that's just the way they were raised, you know. They grew up learning a different type of acceptance. Or, you know, there's some women that their mothers would be like, 'Why don't you have, like, straight hair.' They don't like natural hair…Like, you know, so, like, I think that's just the way people over time, that's just the perception that's been tried and passed down. But the differences now in our culture now, I guess not our culture, but our generation is that the people around my age are more accepting. They don't care, you know. You have natural hair. You have straight hair. That was never like a big concern."

The next story was about a cultural conflict that happened on a basketball court between an 18-year-old, Dominican student and a peer he described as Ecuadorian. He said,

> "Playing basketball. Growing up I was in my basketball team in middle school. And the other team had a, I want to say it was Ecuadorian, I'm not sure. But where he came from, he grew up always playing really rough. So, I was really tired that day, and we were playing, and he had like bumped me, and I was saying, like, 'You can't bump like that because I might fall. You know, I might get hurt.' So it was just you can't really bump that hard. And then he started talking Ecuadorian, I guess Spanish…And I wasn't really understanding what he was saying because I wasn't, I wasn't expecting it. I was expecting him to talk English. So we kind of started arguing back and forth and then, yeah, just, just awful like misinterpretations."

As the student reflected on this experience and the back and forth arguing and yelling in English and Spanish, he thought about why this incident happened. "Just misinterpretation, because I didn't know, well, he didn't know that we played different and then, you know, vice versa."

A 23-year-old, Ecuadorian, male student recounted a story about spending time in nice malls and what he and his friends experience when they enter high-end stores. He said,

> "Well, some of my friends when they go out, and we go to like the nice malls with the high-end things. And the security guards, they always start following. They play dumb, and you can tell we're being followed just because, I guess, they see us as we don't belong there. You know, they don't feel like we're bad people. It's just that they have that perception or bias against us. Because if you get the same type of customers every day, and then you see this odd group, you're going to be, like, thinking, why are we here? So, I view it as, I got to the point where I

> just like questioned the security guard like, 'Why are you following me?' Their response: they're always just quiet. They don't say anything, and they just look at you like you're dumb or something."

When I asked him why he thought this happened, he responded,

> "Just because the stereotype. Everyone has a bias or stereotype for a certain group of people, individuals, whether they like it or not, whether they want to admit it or not. So I just think that they view it as that way. They see us, and they perceive us as different, and that we're known for this. So they are going to assume that, regardless if we do it or not, because I believe that perception is reality, so."

The last story about a cultural conflict comes from a 20-year-old, female, Bangladeshi student who described some of the misconceptions she experiences in class as a result of being a Muslim woman. She said,

> "Just right now, I was in the English 09. People has the misconception of, like, so I'm Muslim. So, people think, like, you know, Muslim men, they don't allow their wives or sister to wear whatever they want. Instead of that, they force them to wear, you know, really just what, that I told her. It's not about, it's not, the religion says that you have to wear the clothes, like fully just clothes, and you have to follow the religious things. If you don't want, you don't have to follow it…So, it's about men, what they want. If men doesn't want a girl to go out, it's men problem not the religious problem."

In thinking about why a female student in her class approached her with assumptions about how Muslim women were treated by the men in their lives, she considered that the student was probably only exposed to her culture in stereotypical films. She said,

> "Because, so, I'm from another country which is like really far. And the girl asked me, I mean, she said that, and she's from a country where, like, Dominican where, like, such a people are, like, different religion. Maybe she doesn't know it, but that's how she said it. She, she saw this thing maybe in dramas because, you know, they watch Indian films and things she said. Maybe she knows from there."

Results of Later Interviews

Later interviews were conducted during week fourteen of the semester. While 14 students completed phase one of the study, four of those students chose not to continue on to phase two. Therefore, the study concluded with a total of 10 student participants. This series of questions centered on: overall experiences in the first semester of college, overall experience in the first-year seminar, and intercultural experiences in the first-year seminar course or on campus. Students also completed a student experience checklist where they shared: experiences in their first-year seminar course, general first-year experiences, and engagement in campus and student life activities. Finally, students reflected on the programs and activities they participated in, which included students from different cultures and may have led them to think differently about other cultures.

Experiences in First-Year Seminar Course

The first-year seminar courses seemed to have an impact on students as evidenced by their responses to a series of questions included in the later interview. For example,

students were asked *"What did you find most useful or valuable in the course?"* Given the seminar's dual focus on academic content and college-success strategies, it is not surprising that references to the latter dominated, though students mentioned aspects of each. The only explicit mention of content was a female student's comment that she "learned about different types of genders and what people, like, their personal view, like, on what the meaning of gender actually is." Others focused on success strategies. One noted the usefulness of information about resources available on campus, and another said, "Like I said before, the different resources we have on campus, how we also can [find support] when we need to find a job or an internship, how we would go to the Career Center, how there's a lot of places for tutoring." In general, students found strategic approaches to college to be particularly valuable, and among these, time management and dealing with procrastination stood out. "Everybody deals with procrastination," one female student noted, "so there were different ... types of procrastination [presented in the class]. So, in a sense, it helps...a person to know: You're in college. You can't procrastinate. You have to do what you have to do. And then also,... on a personal level, like, you might not be in college, but you're at home doing stuff, and you have things to do. You don't want to procrastinate."

As part of the later interview, students were also asked *"What did you find challenging about the course?* In this instance, most student responses were related to the work required in this course relative to their other courses, such as weekly writing assignments, the research paper, and the final project. The comments of an 18-year-old, Dominican, female, accounting student reflect the main sentiment about the workload. She said,

> "How she would make me write a lot. I do not like writing, and some of that would be opinion-based. And we would have a limit like a one-page essay. And it would be a topic where you would want to talk a lot, but you had to limit your opinion to one page. And sometimes tried to keep it as appropriate because some people would have no filter. So try to keep it as appropriate as possible for the class. How sometimes she would make us read a lot of articles. I hated reading those articles, and talking about a topic that wouldn't be interesting."

Another student spoke about the research paper, adding, "It had to be on, so you had to, it was, you could either pick your major or a different major and describe how it was, like discriminating against a sex. Like, for example, most nurses are female, so how would, how would that affect a man that would like to go into that field? And stuff like that."

Intercultural Competence

The final questions in the later interview were focused on students' cultural experiences with classmates in their first-year classes or in campus activities and how these experiences may have changed from the start of the semester when the initial interviews were conducted. The first of these questions was: *Do you think that other students treat you differently based on their perception of your culture, compared to the start of the semester?* Responses to this question were essentially split. Nearly half of the students felt that students did not treat them any differently based on culture, compared to the start of the semester, whereas the other half felt that they were treated differently. In these cases, students attributed the difference to knowing each other better than at the start of the semester.

Interestingly, when asked this question, three students stated a simple "No" and chose not to elaborate. A male, Guyanese student had a slightly different experience:

> "No, not really. The only difference is that, like, people assume that I'm Hispanic. And when they find out that I'm not, like, they, they'll talk to me in Spanish, and then I don't understand, and then, I guess, that kind of, like, raises the eyebrow, because they're, like, 'What? You're not Spanish?' But that's about it. Nothing really changes from there."

An 18-year-old, Dominican, male student had an interesting response to this question and his feelings about the overall diversity of the college. He explained,

> "No. I don't believe that, because the campus is so diverse. There's so much, like, there's so many groups of people here that it isn't. I feel like this is a college where people think of it as, like, we're all equals. And it's just nobody really, like, looks at you different or anything like that because we're all different in some kind of way."

Three students responded affirmatively when asked if their peers treated them differently based on their perception of their culture compared to the start of the semester. A 20-year-old, Dominican, male student noted,

> "Oh, yeah. It happened at the beginning, well, not the rest of the semester. Because once you, at the beginning, it's easy to say. But, like, to class, like, towards the end, I don't see no difference because we already know each other in the class. Well not always, but most of the time, you already know that person or whatever. But at the beginning, it's easier to say because people even thought that I speak a different language than English. So they kind of do not want to talk

> to me just because they would, like, feel they want to. They felt that I was going to judge, judge them because they don't speak English that well or anything like that."

When I asked for clarification, he added, "It's been actually better than where they used to in the beginning." A Dominican female student stated that the situation was different at the end of the semester due to the fact that her peers knew her better than at the start of the semester, so they knew what to expect when she spoke Spanish. She noted,

> "Not any more, I would say, because I would get these looks when I would speak Spanish, and it wouldn't fall into the category that is supposed to fall into. And then, now it's just like people say, see me talking, and they don't give me those looks, and they don't look at me weird."

I asked her why she felt this way, and she said,

> "I have no idea. I feel like it's because where I'm from, I'm Dominican, but I don't go by any of the traditions. I don't have, like, pride for the culture. That's where I'm from, but in, within the D.R., where my family comes from, we come from Santiago. So our way of speaking Spanish is different than somebody from the capital."

An education major and 18-year-old Dominican female talked about how she would hold back in interactions with her peers. She said,

> "Well, I feel like certain people don't, like, want to interact with me socially because of, because of the fact that I'm Dominican because they have certain perceptions of, because some people think that certain Dominicans are mean, or that they are very discriminating and stuff like that. So, it's like I feel like I

> haven't, I haven't had that, that social interaction that I would like to have with others because of that, because they might think that I might act a certain way."

One Puerto Rican, male student spoke about how his peers were more comfortable with him than at the start of the semester, and he attributed this change to his personality more than to any aspect of culture.

> "I think people are more comfortable with me because of my culture, but I don't see them as, and it's not, if it's a culture, it's not like a, an ethnic, what is it, a nationality-based culture. Or it's not, like, it's kind of like everybody has their perception of someone. I don't think it's because of race or ethnicity, you know, because I am the one that talks the loudest in classes. So I think people already have a perception of me like that. But in regards to my nationality and race, no. I don't think anybody has much of a, of an impact or a very passionate view of me. I mean, quite often, I'm the loudest, and I make goat sounds, so [laughter]."

The next question in the later interview was intended to explore engagement between students who are culturally different from each other. The question was, *Do you think that students from other cultures treat you differently, compared to the start of the semester?* Though one student felt that it was easier to connect with students at the end of the semester, the majority of students indicated that they did not feel that culturally different students treated them differently later, compared to the start of the semester.

One student summed up her interactions with culturally different peers as being easier in some ways than engaging with peers from her own culture. She said, "I have people who talk to me from like different cultures, not mine. And I kind of get, like, do better with someone who's from a different country than the one from mine, because they

don't expect, they don't have a mindset about what type of person you should be if you have, if you're in this culture." Six students answered this question with a clear "No" and did not elaborate any further. A few students spoke about how it was common to look beyond culture or to not acknowledge it in some ways. For example, one student noted, " No." Everyone, we're all from the Bronx, so, I think everybody has the same values that we look past the culture part."

Finally, students were asked, *What classes if any, best prepared you to interact with students culturally different from you?* Here, students spoke about their experiences in political science, English, communications, psychology, First-Year Seminar, and history. One student indicated that all classes helped him connect with culturally different peers due to the level of diversity at the college:

> "You mean as overall? All of them basically, because if you go in a class with someone who is from a different country where you guys are in the same class, you guys will have to talk about the specific or whatever you guys are talking about, during the, in the class. So, I feel like overall any class, any class can help to interact with people from different countries…Because this campus is very diverse because there's a lot of people from different countries, so you are going to have, it's not like the institution make this: 'And these classes are going to be only Dominican, and this class is going to be only African American. This class is going to be only Indians. This class is going to be Chinese.' No. They put everyone in, as a mix. So, I feel like that's the good idea for people to interact with each other."

A 25-year-old Puerto Rican male student spoke about his experience in both Political Science and English. He thought,

> "Oohf. I kind of want to say political science. Political science, and if I could put another one there, English. English. And both of them did something that's quite interesting. Because I noticed that, because I observe a lot of people, a lot, and I noticed that in political science their political stances are solely based on their cultural feelings or how they, in their culture kind of feel about something politically. So, then they help me like understand and evaluate why is it that they made the decisions that they made. And, in English, it kind of did the same thing, but it kind of brought everyone on the more universal level, with, like, I know why they did it. They picked, they did what they did because they're us. They're just like me, you know, yeah. So, I think those two classes definitely did that."

One student focused her attention on her psychology and communications classes, noting, "For psychology, it's just more, even though it's just the basics of psychology, I kind of understand how the mind works, and for communications, it's just learning different strategies and the way, how the way we talk can affect someone else." When I asked for clarification, she added, "So, it's actually, it's actually the curriculum or what you're studying or how you're studying it that helps you to maybe think differently about the students." An 18-year old, Dominican, female student studying education spoke about her English and psychology classes and noted,

> "Because I feel, like, there was, there were different, I know there was, they were not all Hispanics, so they had different views on certain topics, and the way like we interacted and when we had to do group work and stuff like that, it was

> different. And I feel like it was better for me because I, I got to basically, I got, I got put in their shoes basically on how they perceived certain views or certain ideas or questions that we have to answer as a group."

Another student spoke about his experience in history,

> "Probably history because in history we're all learning about what's going on in the world, and like current events, and then just like how stuff led to the differences. Like over time how stuff has led to the separation of every type of culture and the expansions and, you know, how, like, conquests affected how we are today."

A Dominican male student said, "I'm not sure. I would have to say FYS because, you know, the theme and everything is just being equal, human rights. I guess you want to kind of interact with other people." Another student, an African-American female also spoke about her FYS course:

> "Why? Because basically, we had to, like, like, other people would write about, we wrote, we had, like, different topics that we had to write about, and some people wrote about, like, their culture, their own culture, and I wrote about my own culture, like, what's happening with, you know, the black community, and they wrote about what's happening in the Hispanic."

A number of students felt that the level of interaction in the class was a factor in preparing them to connect with culturally different peers. For example, a female accounting student spoke about her FYS course, sharing, "FYS [laughs]. All the other classes I wouldn't. It's just like a lecture class, so basically you just sit there, and the

teacher lectures, and you wouldn't have time to interact. But FYS, you would have more interaction."

A female computer science major spoke about how her English, math and sociology classes differed from her FYS course. She described those courses as traditional lectures with little engagement while her FYS course, and, in particular, the instructor, set the stage for a different level of engagement:

> "In FYS, it's, it's really about, let's say, she brings out the professor, my advisor professor, if she brings up a topic, we talk about that, and we, like, give our own opinions. So it's kind of like a discussion class. But in other classes, we're basically listening to the professor, or in math class we're doing math all the time. It's more interactive than any other class is."

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study examines a first-year seminar (FYS) course, other first-year experiences, and the development of intercultural competence among first-year community college students in New York City. Years before the study was conducted, this institution was engaged in a campus internationalization effort. The college wanted their students to graduate and enter the world as global citizens. They wrestled with decisions about the types of experiences students need to develop global awareness and they pondered how to define and measure global awareness and global citizenship. Campus leaders knew they needed to focus on Internationalization at Home (IaH), or campus-based international initiatives, since most of their students were unlikely to have the types of international experiences that might lead to increased awareness or global citizenship. At the same time, the campus was piloting a new FYS course. In early surveys about the course, students indicated that the course prepared them to interact with students from diverse backgrounds. At that time, I was a member of the college's global-initiative steering committee. I was also involved in the development of a first-year operational plan and thought about the connection between the FYS and development of intercultural competence. This experience led to numerous questions about the students' intercultural experiences within the first year of college, which inevitably laid the foundation for the study.

This study was conducted during the Fall Semester 2017. The plan was to learn from first-semester students engaged in an FYS course and to determine if the course itself or other elements of the first-year experience might be contributing factors in the

development of students' intercultural competence. That semester there were 52 FYS course offerings, and student participants were recruited from 11 of those sections. These courses were targeted because they covered topics that related to some aspect of culture or intercultural competence. The first-year experiences considered were those typical of this institution: new student orientation, engagement in student organizations, leadership development, campus committee service, first-year workshop series, or any other co-curricular engagement. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was administered twice during the semester, once at the beginning of the course to establish an intercultural competence baseline and again at the end of the semester to determine if changes in students' intercultural competence had taken place. This instrument was selected because it is a statistically reliable and validated tool, widely respected in the field of international education for measuring intercultural competence. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted at two points during the term, at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester. The interviews were paired with the initial and later administrations of the IDI. Interviews were included in the methodology because students' rich experiences provided direct and critical insights about the first-semester experiences over the course of the term. In this study, the mixed-methods approach, combining the qualitative component of interviews with the quantitative element of the IDI, provided a more comprehensive narrative about students' overall first-year experiences and their levels of intercultural competence over the course of their first semester in college.

The research question in this study was: *How is the development of intercultural competence related to aspects of a first-year seminar course and other first-year experiences among students at a large, urban community college?*

Key Findings in the IDI

The IDI was administered twice during the study, once at the start of the semester and a second time at the end of the semester. This strategy was intended to establish an IDI baseline for students to capture changes that occurred over the course of the semester. The focus of key findings in the IDI is centered on developmental orientation and cultural disengagement.

Key Findings in the First-Year Experience

This study considered a number of typical first-year experiences in relation to students' development of intercultural competence. As part of the later interview, students were asked to complete a checklist of experiences. These included participation in new student orientation, attendance at freshman convocation, attendance at one or more first-year workshops and a reflection about whether first-year experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures. Additionally, students were provided with a checklist of typical campus and student life experiences and they were asked to indicate whether they participated in these experiences. These included: participation in clubs, sports teams, leadership workshops, student government, campus committees, campus volunteer activities, work-study jobs, co-curricular programs or events, social events and a reflection about whether campus and student life experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures.

In the case of first-year experiences, eight students participated in a one-day, on-campus, new-student orientation session and four students each attended freshman convocation and one or more first-year workshop. Four students reflected that these experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures. While these four students do not represent the majority in the study, it is noteworthy that they felt that

these experiences exposed them to students who are culturally different from themselves and something about these experiences prepared them to interact with others.

Students had little to no exposure to campus and student life experiences in their first semester of college. Among the 10 participants, two students participated in a club, two students engaged in a co-curricular program or event, and three students attended a social event. In the reflection section, three students indicated that campus and student-life experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures.

Overall, students in this study were not fully engaged in either typical first-year or campus and student-life experiences. It is noteworthy, however, that when asked to reflect on whether these experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures, most of those who did participate in some aspect of the first-year experience said that this made a difference. Whilst it is difficult to generalize the impact of these experiences on students' intercultural development, one cannot dismiss the reflections from those who did participate and felt that these experiences prepared them to interact with students from other cultures. These experiences led into the next element of the study, the role of the first-year seminar course in student's intercultural development.

Key Findings in the First-Year Seminar

Course Theme

Student participants in this study represented seven unique First-Year Seminar (FYS) sections. Among the 10 students who completed the study, six FYS sections were represented as follows: Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights?; Graphic Narratives: History and Memoir in the Graphic Novel; Understanding the Balancing Act Between Society and Science; Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College; Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choices; Language,

Identity and Community: Examining How the Languages We Speak and the Communities We Live in Shape Us. A closer look at IDI results and, in particular, change in students' developmental orientation from the start of the semester to the end of the semester, indicates that six students made progress along the intercultural development continuum. In other words, from the start of the semester to the end of the semester, their developmental orientation changed and moved and began moving toward an intercultural mindset. Interestingly, in the course, Connecting Cultural Heritage and Success in College, both students showed change and growth in their level of developmental orientation. Two courses, Human Rights: Then and Now: What are Human Rights? and Gender Expectations, Academic Success and Career Choices were associated with mixed results. In the human-rights-themed course, of the three participants enrolled in this course, two showed no change in their developmental orientation and one student showed growth toward an intercultural mindset. In the gender-expectations course, there were two participants in the study and both experienced change in their developmental orientation with one moving more toward an intercultural mindset and the other moving backward toward a monocultural mindset. The only course where one student did not experience change toward an intercultural orientation was, *Graphic Narratives: History and Memoir in the Graphic Novel.* In fact, in this case, the student also experienced a change in developmental orientation but it was in the reverse direction, toward a monocultural mindset.

Course Instructor

Ten first-year students completed this study in the fall of 2017. They were enrolled in six unique FYS courses taught by six unique faculty members. A closer look

at the faculty indicates that five of the six instructors were women. In terms of academic rank, five of the instructors were tenured faculty members representing the following academic departments: Chemistry, History, Health, Physical Education and Recreation and English. Interestingly, the only faculty member with students showing consistent change in developmental orientation toward an intercultural mindset were taught by an adjunct lecturer. All other faculty members, except one, had at least one student participant in their course who experienced change in development orientation toward an intercultural mindset.

High-Impact Practices

All FYS courses included high-impact practices consisting of: FYS course embedded in a learning community; regular advisement; a peer mentor embedded in the course; use of ePortfolio as part of the course requirement; service learning, special projects, or leadership activities embedded in the course; or activities designed to increase student engagement in the course. Interestingly, students did not experience these practices in each of the courses represented in the study; however, all students in the study experienced a peer mentor embedded in the course, regular advisement, and use of ePortfolio as a course tool. Seven students were part of a learning community. Five students experienced service learning, special projects, or leadership activities as part of their course experience and six students indicated that they felt the course prepared them to interact with students from other cultures based on in class activities designed to increase inter-student engagement.

Implications for Policy

For many years, this institution had a robust global initiative and they were committed to preparing students to be "global citizens." While this institution aspired to

graduate global citizens and included some reference to this in their mission statement, they had no idea how to measure this. This is not uncommon as most are not clear about what makes a student, or anyone for that matter, a global citizen. Additionally, global citizenship has often been associated with study abroad or other global intercultural experiences. Since the vast majority of community college students do not typically engage in study-abroad programs, a practical question: How can institutions influence the student experience to mirror the types of experiences, such as study abroad, that tend to enhance intercultural development?

Implications for Practice

Practically speaking, community college leaders who wish to enhance first-year students' intercultural development can do so by making some practical enhancements to the first-year experience that then expand into the overall community college experience. Beginning with the first-year experience, community college leaders can ensure that there is a robust first-year seminar course offered to students in their first semester. Following the example in this study, first-year seminar courses that include the traditional elements of college preparation but are also presented with a theme in which critical college skills are presented seems to be a best practice. Intercultural experiences should be woven into the course, throughout the first-year experience, and for that matter, throughout the entire student journey.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by several factors including study size, cost, study length, and the qualitative component of the methodology, semi-structured interviews.

This study was conducted at an urban community college in New York City. Participants were recruited based on their enrollment in a first-year seminar course. At that time, 52 sections of this course were offered. More than 200 students from 11 sections were targeted based on the course theme which was related to culture, identity, community, society, or a global issue. Fourteen students were recruited for the study and 10 students completed all aspects of the study. This study is small in size, given that it is typical for roughly 800 students to take a first-year seminar each fall at this institution. Since the study population is so small in relation to overall number of students taking the first-year seminar course, it may be difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about the development of intercultural competence over the course of a semester beyond the small sample of students. On the other hand, the interviews were rich and revealing and provided critical insights into students' experiences in the course, in their first semester of college, and how they developed interculturally.

The decision to administer the IDI to a small group of students was purely financial. The cost of each IDI was $11 which brought the total cost to $22 per student, for those who completed both phases of the study. A larger study would have been cost prohibitive.

The length of the study was another limitation. The study took place over the course of one semester which is 16 weeks long. While this is adequate time to assess a semester-long FYS course and students' intercultural development within the course, this time period may not be adequate to assess students' engagement in other first-year experiences such as in student organizations, leadership development, campus committee service and other forms of co-curricular engagement that may be more likely to increase

in the second term and beyond. This could have been addressed by focusing exclusively on co-curricular activities that first-semester students are expected to engage in such as new-student orientation, freshman convocation, and the first-year workshop series.

The final limitation of this study is related to the semi-structured interview methodology. In terms of engaging directly with students in the interview process, the information gathered is derived from students' self-reports. This may impact reliability as there is often a natural desire on the part of student participants to provide socially acceptable responses. In other words, they may not respond accurately and honestly or may at times provide responses that they felt the researcher was looking for.

Directions for Future Research

This study opens the door for additional, robust inquiry in a number of areas related to first-year seminar courses, pedagogy, and student success.

This study suggests that further exploration into relationships among first-year seminar courses, the first-year experience and intercultural development among first-year students is warranted. It would be interesting to see an expanded study in this area, one that involves a greater number of students and experiences more deeply the pedagogical design of first-year seminar courses. In other words, is there something inherent in the design and pedagogy of first-year seminar courses that yields change or growth in students' intercultural competence?

Second, it seems that students in this study benefitted from regular and ongoing opportunities to do group work and to have in-depth conversations around intercultural themes. This may have given them opportunities to explore themselves and their own cultures as well as the cultures of their peers leading to change or growth in intercultural competence. It might be interesting, therefore, to expand this study, beyond the first-year seminar and consider other courses in the first-year sequence to learn about the impact other courses may have on students' intercultural development.

Finally, it would be interesting to consider intercultural competence as a retention and student-success factor. If students show growth in their level of intercultural development in the first semester and first year of college, what might this suggest for term-to-term and year-to-year retention? Is there any relationship between intercultural competence in academic performance and college completion?

Conclusion

Community Colleges are a reflection of the communities they serve, and their student populations are increasingly first-year students of color. They are also in constant transition due to shifting market trends, reduced funding especially in the case of public institutions, and increasing pressure to graduate students as global citizens prepared to live, work and thrive in a 21st century global and multicultural society. Since community college students of color do not typically have adequate access to experiences such as study abroad, where they can develop intercultural skills, institutions can and must consider the student experience and, in particular, the first-year experience as an opportunity to support students' intercultural growth and development. Courses such as the first-year seminar and first-year campus and student-life experiences may serve as a logical starting point for student's intercultural learning and pathway to global citizenship.

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APPENDIX A

University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board Study Confirmation

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research

D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
Email: irb@umn.edu
http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects/

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

September 15, 2017

Melissa Anderson

612-624-5717
mand@umn.edu

Dear Melissa Anderson:

On 9/15/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	An Exploration of Intercultural Competence Among Community College Students: A Focus on First-Year Experiences
Investigator:	Melissa Anderson
IRB ID:	STUDY00000829
Sponsored Funding:	None
Grant ID/Con Number:	None
Internal UMN Funding:	None
Fund Management Outside University:	External collaborator is performing the work : Original funding source is other than federal or business and industry (e.g. the collaborator's internal funding, non-profit grant, etc.)
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed	• Kirk - BCC Letter of Support , Category: Letters of Support / Approvals (Location); • Kirk - Pre-Course Interview, Category: Other;

with this Submission:	• Kirk_Melissa_Research_Flyer_31August2017.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Kirk IRB Budget, Category: Other; • Kirk_HRP-582-TEMPLATE-Social-Behavioral-Consent-Form_31August2017.docx, Category: Consent Form; • Kirk_Melissa_HRP_580_SOCIAL_TEMPLATE_PROTOCOL_31August2017.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Kirk_Melissa_IRBmaterials_31August2017.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Kirk - Certification of IDI Qualified Administrator, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that this study meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To arrive at this determination, the IRB used "WORKSHEET: Exemption (HRP-312)." If you have any questions about this determination, please review that Worksheet in the HRPP Toolkit Library and contact the IRB office if needed.

This study met the following category for exemption:

• (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that Human Subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the Human Subjects responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Ongoing IRB review and approval for this study is not required; however, this determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a Modification to the IRB for a determination.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the HRPP Toolkit Library on the IRB website.

For grant certification purposes, you will need these dates and the Assurance of Compliance number which is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003).

Sincerely,

Bri Warner

IRB Analyst

We value feedback from the research community and would like to hear about your experience. The link below will take you to a brief survey that will take a minute or two to complete. The questions are basic, but your responses will help us better understand what we are doing well and areas that may require improvement. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

Even if you have provided feedback in the past, we want and welcome your evaluation.

https://umn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5BiYrqPNMJRQSBn